ENTERTAINMENT / A2-1

How Nikki mends her broken heart

SPORTS / A36

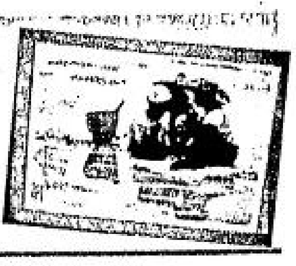
Nowitzki shines in clutch, lifts Mavs to 2-1 lead over Spurs

BUSINESS / B1

Overseas workers' remittances hit 8-year high

LIFESTYLE / D3

Eastern Samar: Beyond typhoons, NPA guerrillas



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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, May 15, 2006 ★★ 8 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 156 P18 website: www.inq7.net

Young pianist impresses Licad in Ilocos concert

By Cristina Arzadon
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

PIDDIG, ILOCOS NORTE—THE NEXT CECILE Licad could be an Ilocana.

Bianca Montañez, 14, is from Piddig, a small historic town in Ilocos Norte better known as the seat of the Basi Revolt.

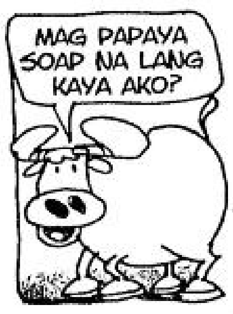
At Licad's concert on April 30 at the Paoay Church, which opened the Filipino Heritage Festi-

YOUNG/ A23

Skin whiteners may be dangerous to your beauty

MAKHAM KHU, THAILand—The cream that Panya Boonchun applied to her face and neck was supposed to transform her into a white-skinned beauty, the kind she saw in women's magazines and on television.

SKIN/ A21


MAG PAPAYA SOAP NA LANG KAYA AKO?

93rd leftist leader killed

Military crackdown or CPP purge?

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDo—Just a day after Malacañang ordered a thorough inquiry into the unabated killing of militants, assassins posing as customers shot dead a Bayan Muna leader after ordering beers in a videoke bar.

The murder of Bayan Muna coordinator Manuel Nardo on Saturday night in this Pampanga city brought to at least 123 the number of leftist activists killed since President Macapagal-Arroyo took office in 2001, according to an INQUIRER count. Of that figure, 93 were Bayan Muna members.

Nardo was also the fourth militant to die by an assassin's hand in five days.

Militant groups denounced the latest violence as part of an alleged military "cleansing" of leftist elements. The military claimed the killings were a sequel to the Communist Party of the Philippines' purge of its ranks in the 1980s.

"Bayan Muna leaders are being killed like chickens ... They are dropping dead like flies," Bayan Muna secretary general Robert de Castro said in a phone interview.

A human rights group said the two killers posed as customers of a videoke bar belonging to Nardo's mother and ordered beer when they walked in at around 9:30 p.m.

Since there was no beer, Nardo went out to get some from a nearby store.

The two men followed him and one of them shot Nardo in the neck with a .45-cal. pistol, according to the Karapatan group.

As Nardo fell, he was shot three more times in the abdomen.

93RD LEFTIST/ A23

2 chambers of Congress seen to clash on priorities

By Michael Lim Ubac and TJ Burgonio

IT WILL BE "TOTAL WAR" BETween the legislative and executive branches when Congress resumes sessions today, says Rep. Roilo Golez.

Congress itself is of two minds on priorities in the nine remaining days before it adjourns *sine die*.

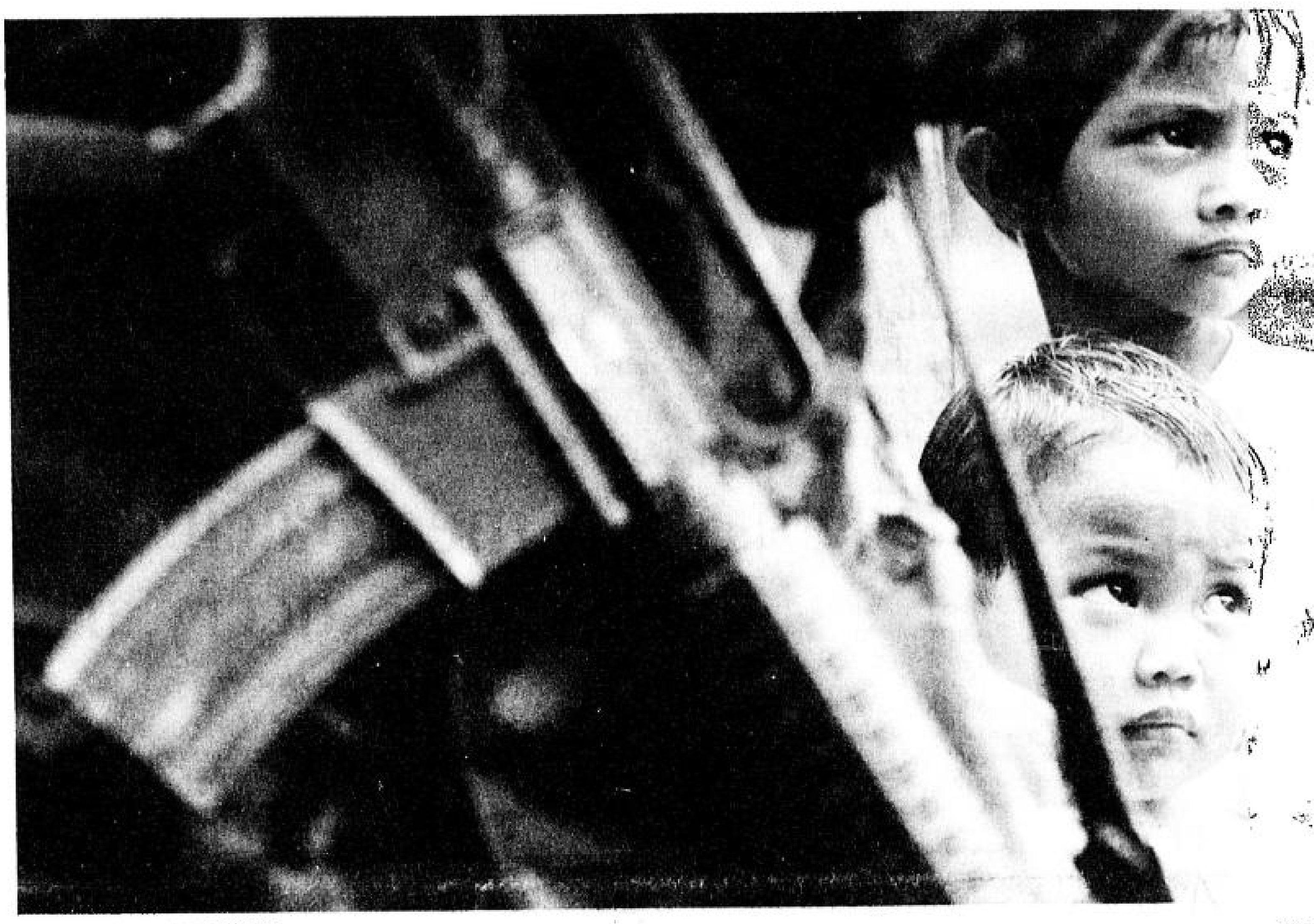
Charter change—endorsed by 180 members—is on top of the agenda of the House of Representatives' leadership.

For the Senate, the main concern is passing the long-delayed P1.053-trillion national budget for this year. "This is our top priority and we have no excuse not to pass it," said Sen. Joker Arroyo.

The budget was approved by the House only on April 4, on the eve of the long Lenten recess—five months late. In the past, the House usually transmitted the approved budget by November in time for its passage before the yearend.

Under the proposed budget, the Department of Education was allotted the lion's share of P119.1 billion, followed by the Department of Public Works and Highways, P62.3 billion; Department of National Defense, P46.6 billion; Department of Agriculture, P15.6 billion; Department of Transportation and Communications, P14.3 billion, and the Department of Health, P10.6 billion.

2 CHAMBERS/ A21



GUARDED MOMENTS

REUTERS

Children wait next to a soldier before entering a mobile clinic run jointly by the US military and the Armed Forces of the Philippines in Barangay Luuk on Jolo island. More than 1,000 people gathered at a school in Luuk to receive free medical services, including minor operations and dental surgery.

'Caloy' casualty in Bicol feared big waves

By Ephraim Aguilar and Michael Jaucian
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LEGAZPI CITY—ONE OF THE 27 people who died when the motorboat Mae-Ann 5 sank at the height of storm "Caloy" didn't want to be at sea because he was afraid of big waves.

The man was Wilfredo Magdaraog, who was actually a bus inspector of Lobrigo Bus Lines but was temporarily assigned as an inspector on the Mae-Ann 5 by its owners, who also owned the bus firm.

"My father's boss said he would be working on the boat for only one week but it had already been one month and he (the boss) would not let go of him," Annabelle, eldest daughter of Magdaraog, told the INQUIRER between sobs.

The outrigger, which plied the Masbate-Pilar route, sank on Friday morning.

The overall storm casualty toll compiled by the INQUIRER from official sources and from its correspondents in the field stood yesterday at 37. They included 10 people who were killed by falling trees and walls or who were electrocuted elsewhere in Bicol and the Visayas.

Annabelle, 29, said in a mobile phone interview that her father had long been asking his boss, Lobrigo, to transfer him back to his

CALOY/ A9

Con-ass bid could mean Senate days numbered

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

USUALLY A PROVOCATIVE PERson, Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago last week startled friends and foes alike with a statement that sounded like she was starting the countdown for the demise of the Philippine Senate by July next year.

When Congress opens its third session in July, she said it could already convene as a constituent assembly to consider a revision of the Constitution to make way for the shift to a parliamentary system with a unicameral legislature.

The statement had a seismic political effect in that it aligned her with the point of view held by the House of Representatives and the Arroyo administration, whose preferred option for Charter change is the constituent assembly rather than the constitutional convention favored by most senators.

Santiago was the first senator to indicate support for the House interpretation of Article 17 of the Constitution providing that "Congress, upon a vote of three-fourths of all its members" may consider constitutional amendments.

The House leadership argues that amendments may be made by a three-fourths vote of Congress voting as a constituent assembly. Senators argue that the vote should be done separately in each chamber.

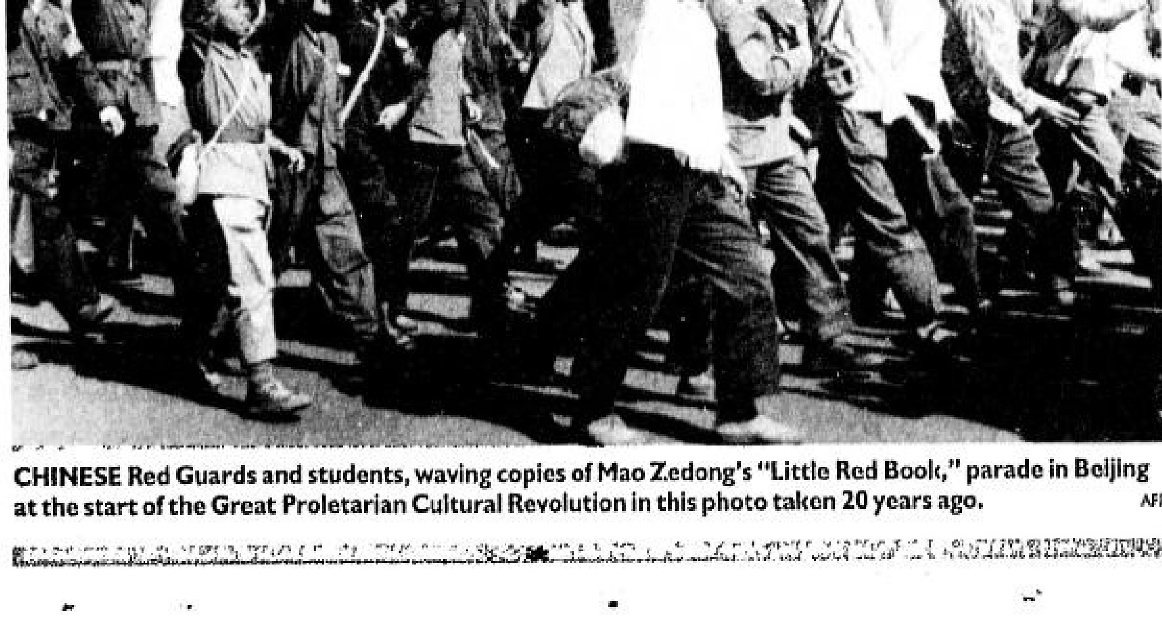
In supporting the constituent assembly mode, Santiago qualified that the issue be first resolved by the Supreme Court. This caveat did not, however, stop her Senate colleagues from stigmatizing her as a heretic.

What jolted them was that Santiago rubbed salt in the wound by delivering the blast that she believed that some sena-

CON-ASS/ A20

10 YEARS OF CHAOS IN CHINA

Tragedy of Cultural Revolution recalled



CHINESE Red Guards and students, waving copies of Mao Zedong's "Little Red Book," parade in Beijing at the start of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in this photo taken 20 years ago. AFP

BEIJING—FORTY YEARS AGO ON TUESDAY, Chairman Mao Zedong unleashed China's infamous Cultural Revolution—a decade of terror and violence that continues to haunt both the country and its people.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, now officially referred to as "10 years of catastrophe," was to unravel in a disaster that claimed millions of lives and pushed China to the brink of economic and social collapse.

The movement officially began on May 16, 1966, with a directive from Chinese Communist Party (CCP) chief Mao charging that "representatives of the bourgeoisie" had infiltrated all levels of the party and intended to establish a "dictatorship."

The motives for the Cultural Revolution's launch are complex, although Mao's intention to eliminate people who threatened him politically is now seen as a stronger reason than his apparent desire to create social equality through eradication of a new class of exploitative bureaucratic rulers.

"Mao told people that he wanted to realize a fair and equal society. He deceived people by saying that (inequality) was due to his ene-

TRAGEDY/ A22

A FAMILY photo in Luohe City's Nanjie village in Henan, where Mao is still highly revered. REUTERS

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Western section of Luzon will experience rains and gusty winds and the coastal waters along these areas will be moderate to rough. The rest of Luzon and Western Visayas will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/05/14/06 SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Rains	Roxas	Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Rains	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Rains	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Stormy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

‘Da Vinci Code’ will strengthen faith, says expert

WITH THE MOVIE “THE DA VINci Code” nearing its showing date in Manila on May 18, a Filipino Bible expert of the Catholic Church, which had branded the film as blasphemous, welcomed the movie yesterday because he believed it would redound to the good of the religion.

“The Catholic Church will come out a much stronger Church after this controversy,” said Fr. Regino Cortes, the only Filipino member of the Vatican’s Pontifical Biblical Commission. “We’ve been through worse controversies before.”

The Hollywood adaptation of Dan Brown’s best-selling novel of the same title suggests, among other things deemed heretical by the Church, a relationship between Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene.

Last week, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines called on Catholics to affirm the truths of their faith in the wake of the controversy. But it didn’t say if it preferred to have the movie banned.

A Catholic Philippines has also probably prompted movie producer Sony Pictures to announce that “The Da Vinci Code” had been approved for exhibition in 36 countries, including predominantly Catholic Spain, France and Poland.

The movie was deemed “suitable for all ages” in most of these countries, the studio claimed in a statement.

Cortes, 64, author of the book “The Da Vinci Code: An Exegetical Review” which disputes literary, historical and theological passages in the novel, noted the movie would have a longer reach than the novel, said to have sold more than 40 million copies worldwide.

In the final analysis, he said, the controversy generated by Brown should encourage the faithful to come up with a much better Church.

“The Catholic Church will survive as it has always done,” Cortes said. *Christian V. Esguerra*

Everest teams begin final push for top of the world

By Alcuin Papa

AND THEY’RE OFF.

Two teams that are attempting to climb Mt. Everest, the highest mountain in the world at 29,035 feet, started over the weekend their historic trek from Everest Base Camp.

Leo Oracion, one-half of the Philippine expedition climbing Mt. Everest, left Base Camp last Saturday (Philippine time) to begin his assault on the summit. His partner, Pastor Emata, will start his own trek today and will meet up with Oracion along the route.

The two adventure racers are members of the First Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition (FPMEE) and are considered the two strongest climbers in the team.

In an interview with ABS-CBN, which is supporting the team, an emotional Oracion said he wanted to show the world that Filipinos were capable of achieving great feats. He also expressed his wish that with their eventual success, the country would be united.

Regie Pablo, FPMEE team leader, told the INQUIRER that he was able to talk to Emata before the latter left Base Camp to join Oracion.

“He (Emata) said he is in good health and his confidence level is very high. He is also asking for prayers. So far, the weather is good and we hope that it will hold till they reach the summit,” Pablo said.

He added that it would take three to four days of trekking to reach the summit of Mt. Everest from Base Camp.

Meanwhile, another climber, Romi Garduce, an IT professional in his 30s, is set to leave Base Camp on Sunday or Monday to begin his own attempt.

The past weekend, the two teams had been resting at Everest Base Camp (5,400 m or 17,700 ft) before their assault on the summit. Both teams had made it to Camp 3 (6,828 m or 22,376 ft) in the past few weeks.

Aside from resting, the three climbers had been waiting for good weather and the fixing of ropes on the upper sections of the Southeast route, specifically from Camp 4 (8,000 m or 26,000 ft) to a place called the Balcony near the summit. The fixed ropes will hopefully be in place by May 16.

Camp 4 is considered the Death Zone where oxygen deprivation due to the extremely high altitude will push the climbers’ bodies to the limit. Once the teams reach Camp 4, they will rest for a few hours and then start their final push for the summit at midnight to try to reach the summit the next morning. This will allow the climbers to start their descent in the afternoon of the following day since descending at night is dangerous.

Mounteverest.net reported yesterday that other expedition teams had already started their own push for the summit from Base Camp.

The FPMEE had originally scheduled their Everest climb for 2007. But when they heard Garduce was climbing this year, they sent their two strongest climbers, Oracion and Emata, to try to reach the peak this year as a sort of “reconnaissance climb” for the 2007 attempt.

In August of last year, Oracion and Emata managed to summit Mt. Muztagh-Ata (24,758 ft) in the Himalayan range and set the record for the highest altitude reached by a Filipino.

The record was broken a month later when Garduce reached the peak of Mt. Cho-Oyu (26,906 ft), the sixth-highest mountain in the world.

The FPMEE is being supported by ABS-CBN while Garduce is being backed by rival network GMA 7.

Asean economic execs begin 3-day meet

ECONOMIC MINISTERS FROM the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) will gather in Manila today for a three-day meeting with economic integration and trade issues topping the agenda.

The meeting was to have taken place on the resort island of Boracay, but was cancelled at the last minute when tropical storm Caloy ripped through the country on Friday, leaving at least 35 dead.

“We had wanted to give the ministers a relaxed atmosphere for their annual informal brainstorming and strategy-setting session,” Trade Secretary Peter Favila said in a statement Sunday. “But when Caloy hit we thought it best to move the meeting to Manila.”

Favila said the meeting will cover issues of “intra-Asean economic integration and integration with free trade agreement partners.”

The ministers are expected to discuss progress towards implementing an Asean Economic Community (AEC) and a free trade agreement (FTA) with South Korea.

Trade department officials said earlier that an agreement could be signed at the close of the three-day meeting.

Details of the Asean-South Korea FTA have yet to be finalized and it is not known what products will be covered or when the agreement will take effect.

South Korea and Asean signed an agreement last December to start phasing in a free-trade agreement from July this year.

However, the talks hit a snag in March over tariffs on sensitive items such as food products for Asean and automobiles, steel and mobile phones for South Korea.

Under the proposed deal, South Korea and six more-developed Asean countries—Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand—were expected to start cutting tariffs from July.

The deal was to come into full effect with the other four Asean members — Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam — at a later date.

But fine-tuning of the accord has met with problems over what products to include, with South Korea initially hesitant on cutting tariffs on rice, a key agricultural export for Asean countries, officials say.

The proposed accord specifies that South Korea and each Asean country may choose up to 40 items that could be excluded from tariff reductions for an unspecified period.

Asean already has negotiated a free trade deal with China, and is aiming to create the world’s biggest free trade zone by 2010 with a combined population of nearly two billion people.

Japan, meanwhile, is also trying to push for individual FTAs with a number of Asean members, including the Philippines and Vietnam, among others. *AFP*

Pacific planholders decry arrest threat

By Alcuin Papa

“FIRST THEY TOOK OUR MONEY. Now they want to send us to jail.”

This was the response of planholders of troubled pre-need firm Pacific Plans Inc. (PPI) after learning that warrants of arrest had been issued against them.

Philip Piccio, president of the Parents Enabling Parents Coalition (PEP) Coalition, said the warrants of arrest issued against 16 PEP officers was the result of the libel cases filed against them by PPI, which is owned by the Yuchengco family.

“This is the Mother’s Day gift from the Yuchengcos to the mothers in our group. First, they took our money and now they want to send us, ordinary fathers and mothers who are fighting for the future of our children, to jail,” Piccio told the INQUIRER.

Piccio said their group would not be able to post the P30,000 bail bond each. “We are all in dire straits after we had to borrow money to pay for our children’s tuition after the company reneged on its contract to pay that. Now we have nothing for the bail bond.

However, Piccio said they would continue their fight. “These (arrest warrants) will not stop us.”

Lawyer Jessie John P. Gimenez, president of Philippine Integrated Advertising Agency, a member of the Yuchengco Group of Companies, said they filed the libel cases against the group last November because PPI officials “have to defend ourselves.”

“We can only take so much. But we went the legal way for redress. Let the case go its normal course and let the courts now decide whether our detractors are guilty or not,” Gimenez said in a statement.

Aside from Piccio, the other accused were Mia Gatmaytan, Ma. Anabella Relova Santos, John Joseph Gutierez, Jeselyn Upano, Jose Dizon, Rolando Pareja, Wenina Bonifacio, Elvira Cruz, Cornelio Zafra, Vicente Ortueste, Victoria Gomez Jacinto, Jurencio Pereche, Ricardo Loyares, Peter Suchianco and Trennie Monsod.

Gimenez said the PEP Coalition attacked YGC and its major stockholders on its website (www.pepcoalition.org), at press conferences and in interviews to the media. The articles in the website were “false and without factual basis,” he said.

In April 2005, PPI filed for rehabilitation before a Makati City court claiming it could no longer fulfill its obligations due to rising tuition rates. But the planholders opposed the move. The two sides tried to negotiate a settlement but the talks bogged down.

Last April, Makati City Judge Romeo Barza approved PPI’s rehabilitation and ordered it to pay availing planholders up to P20,000 a year in tuition support until 2010.

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‘Free Ka Bel on bail’

THE INTER-PARLIAmentary Union called on the Philippine government to free detained Anakpawis party-list Rep. Crispin “Ka Bel” Beltran on bail, at the close of the group’s summit in Kenya last Friday.

The IPU adopted the resolution pressing for Beltran’s release upon the recommendation of its human rights committee and on the motion of Filipino parliamentarians, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said yesterday.

Senate President Franklin Drilon and Senators Panfilo Lacson and Pia Cayetano also attended the summit.

Beltran is facing rebellion charges in connection with the alleged plot by an alliance of rightist soldiers and communist rebels to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo. He has been detained since he was arrested on Feb. 25 during the state of emergency declared by the President.

Pimentel last week argued before the IPU the case of Beltran and the five other party-list lawmakers who had been slapped with the same charges. *TJ Burgonio*

I have no inside info on ‘jueteng’ — Chavit

SAYING HE HAD NO INSIDE INformation about “jueteng,” Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis “Chavit” Singson refused to accept former President Joseph Estrada’s challenge that he reveal what he knows about First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo’s alleged involvement in the illegal numbers game.

Singson, who had exposed Estrada’s alleged receipt of kickbacks from jueteng and the tobacco excise taxes of Ilocos Sur that led to the latter’s ouster, instead belittled Estrada’s challenge.

“Erap seems to equate truth with political convenience, or else why would he dare me to reveal the First Gentleman’s links to illegal gambling like jueteng?” Singson said in a statement. “I have no inside information as regards jueteng operations and, therefore, his attempt to paint my image as a blackmailer is totally absurd.”

Singson claimed Estrada had tried to pay him off to keep his mouth shut.

“The fact is he made several attempts to buy my silence but I came out with the truth about his illegal activities and the rest is history,” he said.

Earlier, Estrada dared Singson and President Macapagal-Arroyo to tell the truth about each other’s activities.

He said Singson knew about the illegal activities of Ms Arroyo, which was why the governor had threatened to withdraw support from her if she entered into a deal with the former president that could lead to his acquittal.

But the Ilocos Sur governor yesterday warned that Ms Arroyo would lose her supporters if she entered into a deal that would exonerate Estrada.

“We all want justice to run its full course. Every right-minded Filipino would agree with me that an acquittal resulting from a deal is a travesty of justice; President Arroyo would therefore lose her precious base of support if she lets it happen” Singson said.

As for Estrada’s challenge to Ms. Arroyo to file charges against Singson for the latter’s accumulated cash advances from the tobacco excise tax, he said there were no such advances.

“There is no truth to that. His own men had peddled this lie for years but up to now, they have not filed any case against me,” said Singson. *Leila B. Salaverria*

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Gas, LPG prices up

AS WORLD OIL PRICES CONTINUED to escalate, oil firms again raised fuel prices by 50 centavos a liter and cooking gas prices by 50 centavos a kilogram.

Oil refiner Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. led the price hike, raising gasoline, diesel and kerosene prices by 50 centavos a liter and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) prices by 50 centavos a kg at 12:01 a.m. Sunday.

No. 1 player Petron Corp. and pure product importer Chevron Philippines Inc. increased prices of the same products by the same levels at 6 a.m. the same day.

New player Eastern Petroleum Corp. implemented a similar price increase at noon Sunday.

Flying V and Seaoil Petroleum Corp. increased prices at 12:01 a.m. today, followed by Unioil Petroleum Philippines Inc. and Total (Philippines) Corp. at 6 a.m.

According to data from the Department of Energy, the regional benchmark Dubai crude shot up to an average of $66.17 a barrel as of May 11 from an April average of $64.14 a barrel.

Since the start of the year, oil firms have hiked gasoline prices nine times by a total of P4.50 a liter. Diesel and kerosene prices have risen 10 times by a total of P5 a liter.

These new price adjustments bring premium unleaded gasoline prices to between P38.79 and P40.26 a liter, diesel to between P33.79 and P35.42 a liter, and kerosene to between P36.60 and P39 a liter.

LPG prices now range from P421.19 to P486.16 per 11-kg cylinder.

All the prices are inclusive of the 12-percent value-added tax.

Abigail L. Ho

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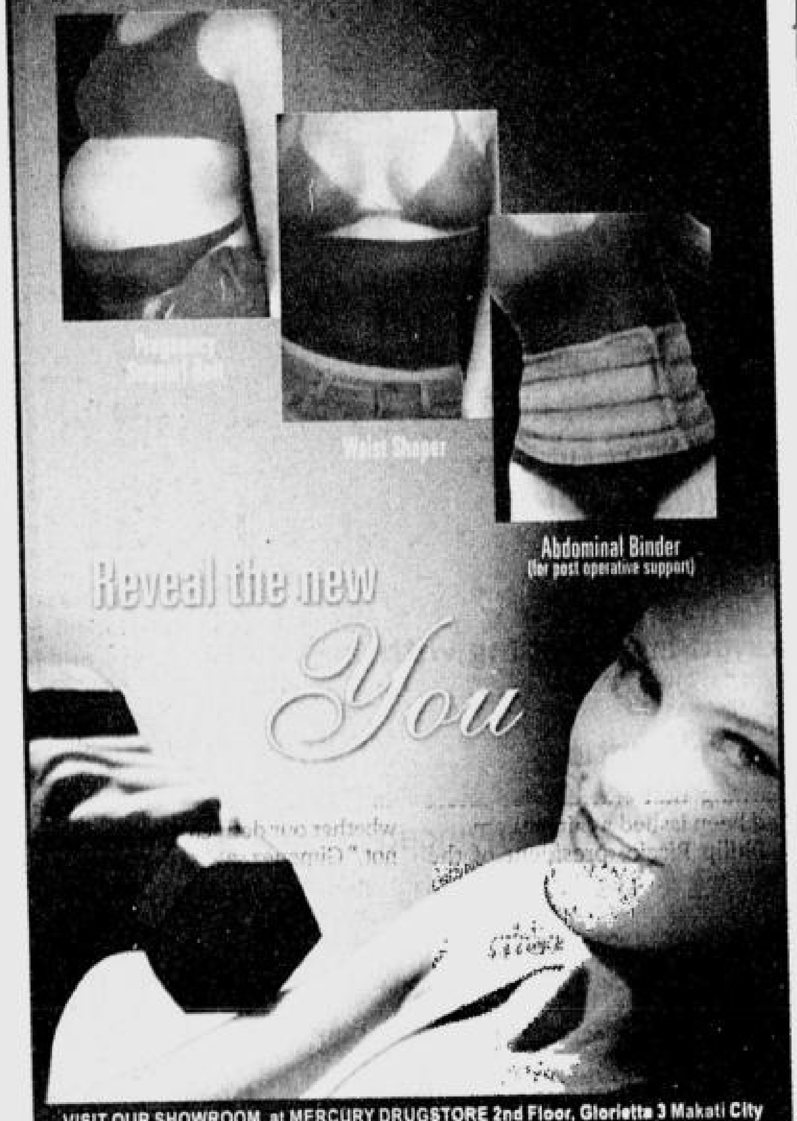

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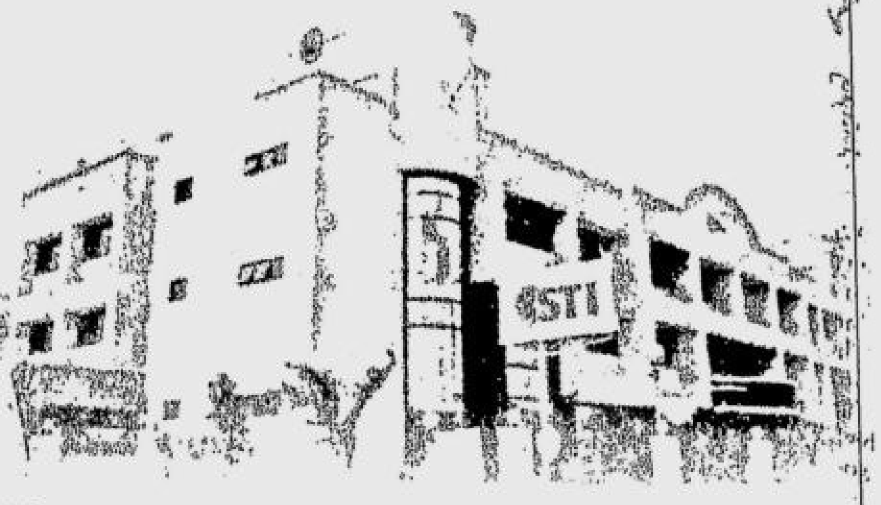

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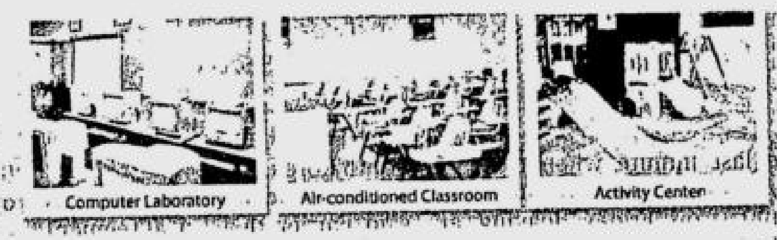

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An Urgent Appeal to our People:
THIS IS OUR LAST CALL

Over the past weeks, The Consumer & Oil Price Watch (COPW) has continuously urged the Filipino people to join in the discussions and debates regarding Charter Change.

The support and positive response to our call for public information and participation has been overwhelming with over 3,000 responses through text messages, phone calls, faxes, and emails.

THE PEOPLE HAVE SPOKEN.

90% are AGAINST the Transitory Provisions and WANT Elections in May 2007 under the Current Presidential or the Proposed Parliamentary System.

A staggering 90% of all respondents rejected the four (4) previously published Transitory Provisions of the Draft Constitution that would **CANCEL** the elections for senators, congressmen, and local elections scheduled in **May 2007** and would **EXTEND** the terms of office of these elected officials.

People WANT ELECTIONS in May 2007.
They don't want officials taking office without benefit of election and serving until 2010.

People's Initiative is not the right way to amend the Constitution.
The way proponents of Cha-cha are undertaking People's Initiative is so simplistic, while the issues concerning Cha-cha is much more complex.

Furthermore, the Supreme Court has yet to decide on the legality of People's Initiative. COPW appeals to the Supreme Court to finally end the confusion brought about by People's Initiative and once and for all decide on its legality.

COPW will ask the **COMELEC** if they have begun counting and comparing the signature campaign being done by the proponents of People's Initiative. COPW will also be examining the forms they are asking people to sign, and if so this information be made **PUBLIC** at the Barangay Level within City and Province.

The COPW has always maintained that the only legal, viable and DEMOCRATIC way to amend the Constitution is through a Constitutional Convention (CON-CON).
Amendments to the Constitution must be studied and reviewed by delegates who will be elected by the people from various fields of specialization.

COPW recommends that the Con-Con to culminate in a National Referendum coinciding with the May 2007 elections.

If we are to elect delegates who will preside in the Constitutional Convention,
COPW again appeals that electoral Reforms must be in place NOW.
We desperately need a credible and independent COMELEC. Only when our people are convinced that elections are clean, honest and free from anomaly will they respect **ANY** results.

COPW reiterates that a shift from Presidential to a Parliamentary system will NOT be the solution to our problems.

**In order for our country to genuinely prosper,
Change must come from ALL our POLITICAL LEADERS.**

**We appeal to our leaders' sense of statesmanship and nationalism.
Set aside personal conflicts and put NATIONAL INTEREST over and above personal agenda.**

Our people deserve nothing less.

Even as Congress will again adjourn on June 10 and reconvene in July, we repeat our appeal to our countrymen that there is a ***greater need for vigilance***. Congress should hear the people's voice. And the people should make their voice heard.

**Let the true will of the People prevail.
Make our democracy work. For our future. For the people.**

MAKE YOUR VOICE BE HEARD.

A. A shift from the Presidential to Parliamentary is NOT the solution to our problems.
   ☐ **YES, I agree.**
   ☐ **NO, I do not agree.**

B. Change must come from ALL our Political Leaders.
   ☐ **YES, I agree.**
   ☐ **NO, I do not agree.**

C. Genuine election reforms must be in place NOW.
   ☐ **YES, I agree.**
   ☐ **NO, I do not agree.**

D. If there are changes needed in the Constitution, it should be amended through:
   ☐ **a signature campaign known as People's Initiative.**
   ☐ **a Constitutional Convention.**

**Send your answers to our Special Cha-Cha Information Hotline numbers.
Please include your name, address, age, barangay, city or province.**

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₱70-M steel bar shipment seized

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS HAS SEIZED A P70-million shipment of misdeclared and undervalued steel bars from China at the Port of Manila.

The shipment, consigned to Kingson International Trading Corp., would have cost the government P6.7 million in lost taxes and duties had it not been apprehended.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales said the shipment was declared to be round bars used as raw materials and priced at only $0.22 each. Upon inspection, however, the steel bars were found to be finished products valued at $0.48 each.

"The items were misdeclared and grossly undervalued... That's technical smuggling," Morales said in a phone interview.

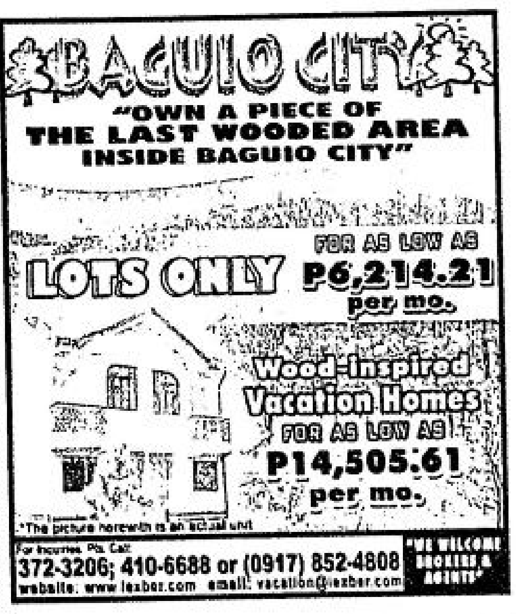
He said the bureau was tipped off about the shipment by informants in the private sector.

Half of the steel bar shipment had been taken out of the Port of Manila on Friday when the discrepancies were discovered. Customs agents went after the shipment and recovered most of it as of yesterday.

Morales ordered the bureau personnel who processed the shipment and allowed its release investigated.

He said the bureau would also go after the importer and broker responsible for the misdeclared steel bars.

"We cannot let them do this. Otherwise, our collections would not be as good as they can be," he said.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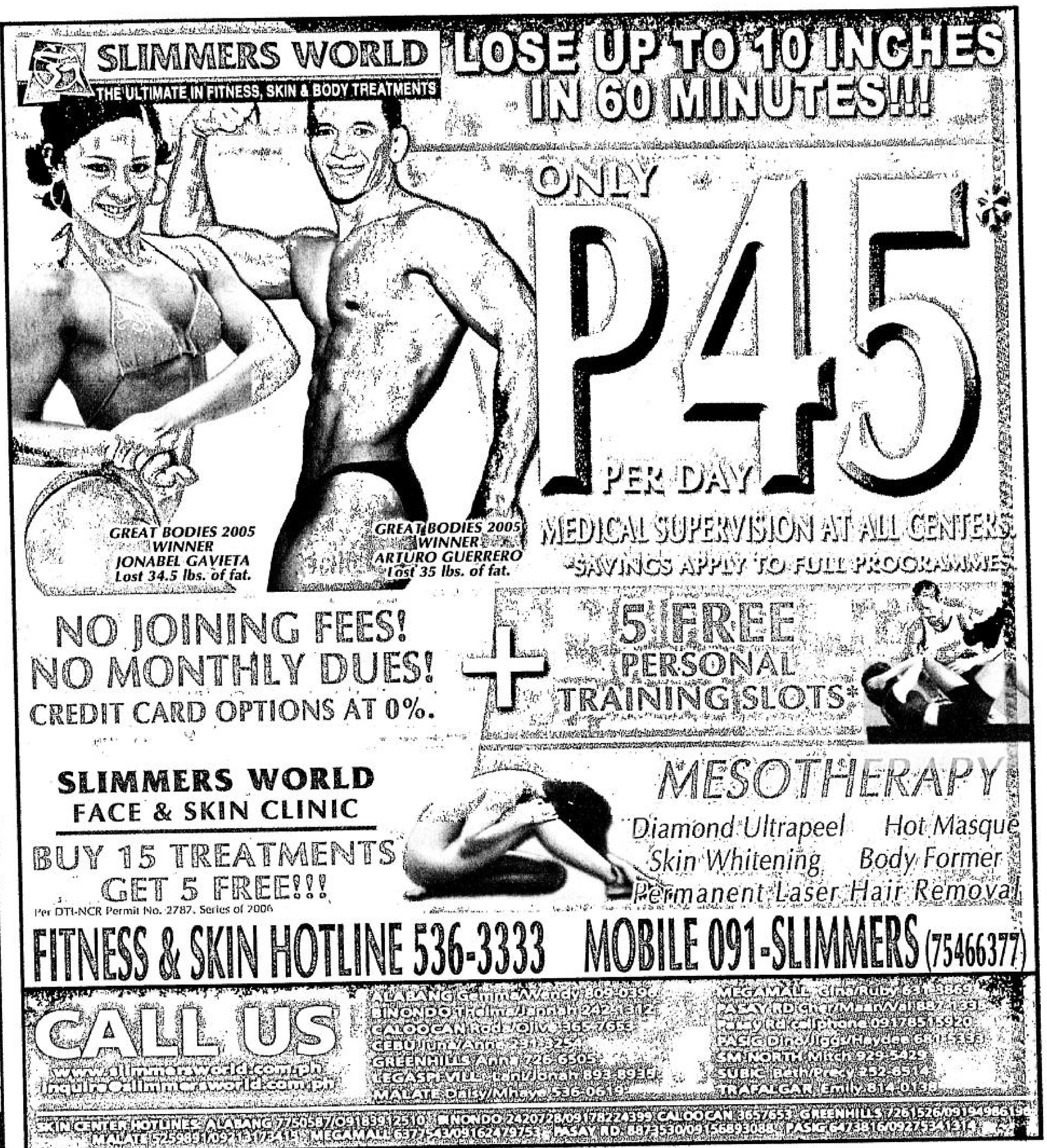
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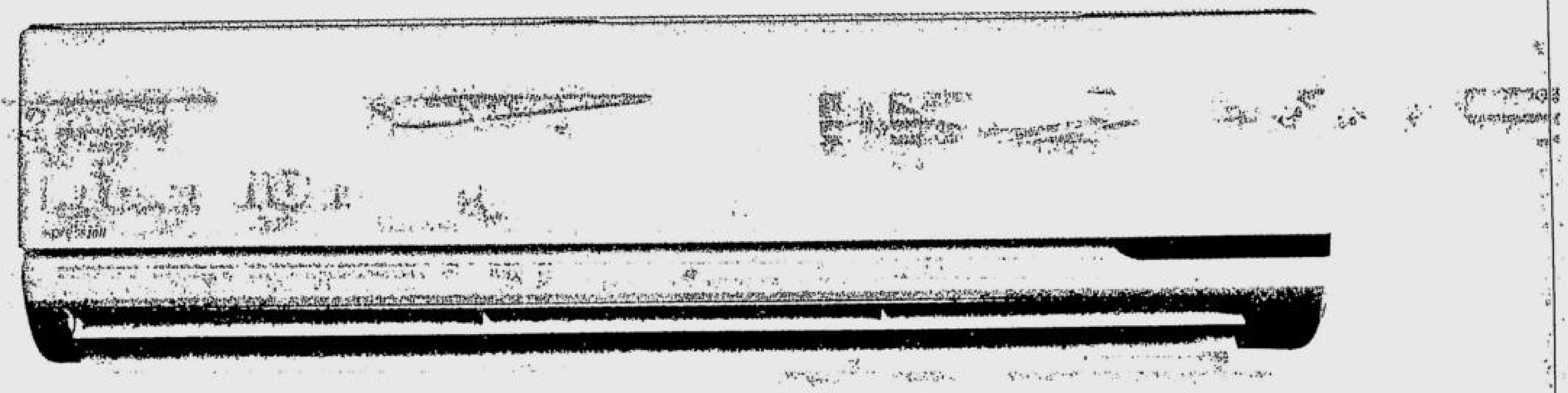

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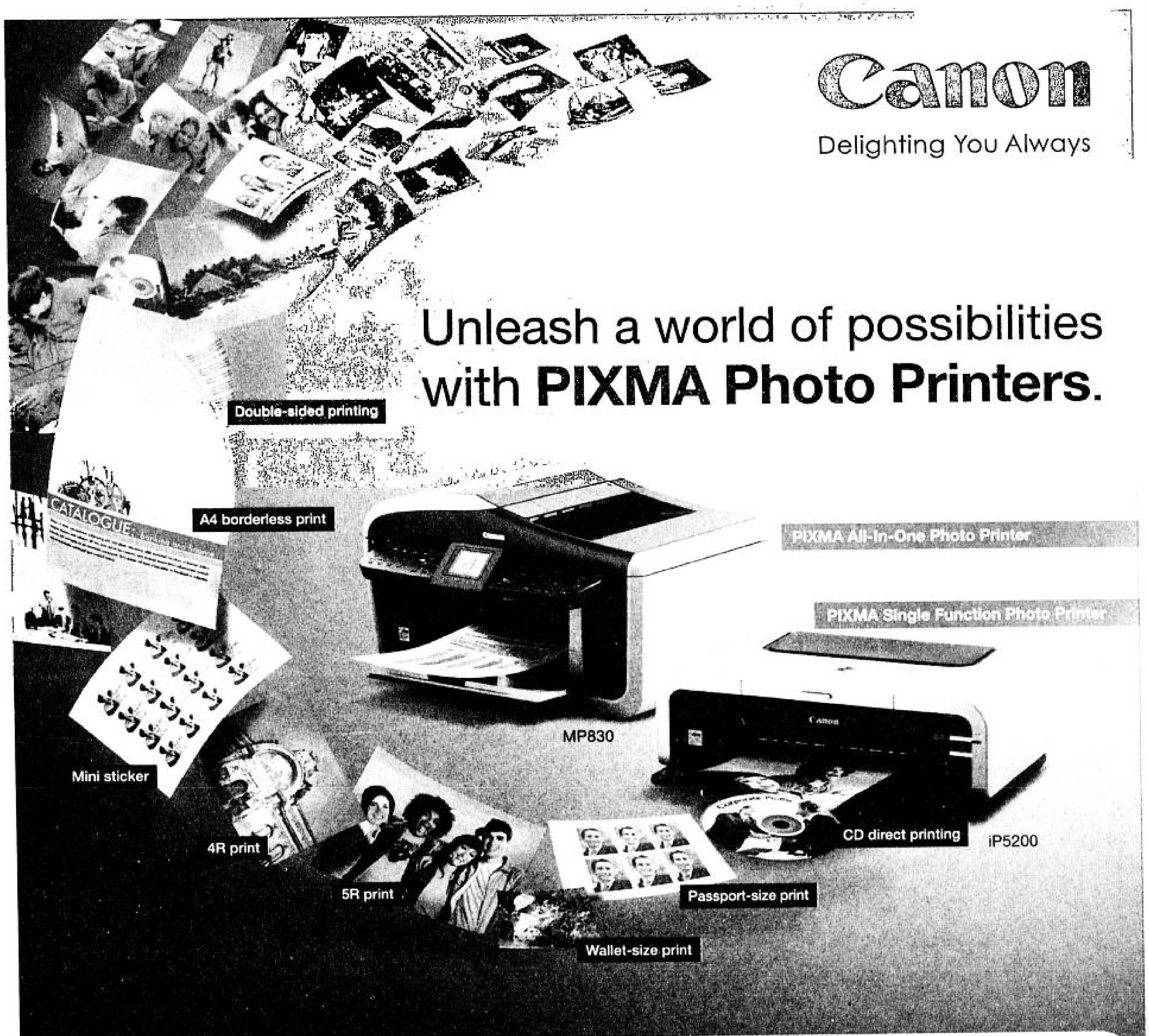

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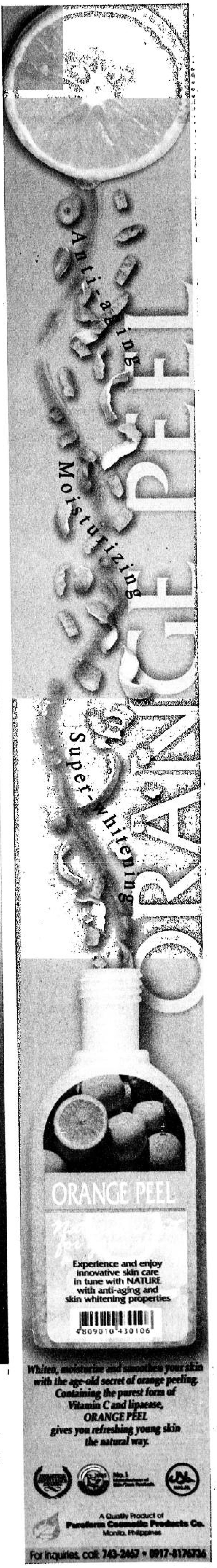

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Runway repair ahead of sked

THE REPAIR WORK on runway 13/31 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport may be completed sooner than its October 2006 deadline.

The rehabilitation of the runway, which services domestic flights out of Naia Centennial Terminal and the Manila Domestic Terminal, is 34 percent complete, Alfonso Cusi, Manila International Airport Authority chief, said yesterday.

"I am happy to report we might be opening runway 13/31 to commercial operations sooner than expected," Cusi said in a statement.

An earlier reopening of the domestic runway will ease the congestion on international runway 06/24, which has had to accommodate domestic flights. From a regular 30 flights an hour during peak operations, the runway has had to service up to 45 flights an hour, the Miaa said.

The Miaa said the upgraded domestic runway would be able to service the new Airbus 319 and 320 fleet of Cebu Pacific.

The runway's "improved strength" would also allow huge aircraft like the 747 series to land once Naia Terminal 3 becomes operational.

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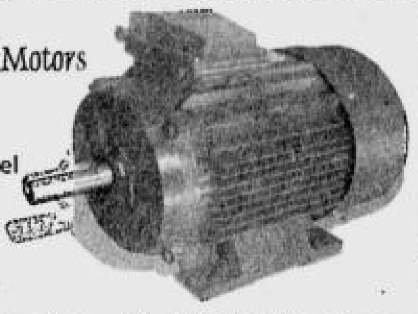

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'Caloy' casualty in Bicol feared big waves

From page A1

regular assignment as a bus inspector.

But she said his employers kept him on the boat in a temporary assignment.

"He had a fear of the big waves that they would encounter from time to time," the daughter said.

The Mae-Ann 5 had been anchored at the Masbate port when Caloy struck.

Seeking cover

Fearing that big waves might batter the vessel, the captain told the passengers that they would seek a safe place to dock.

About one kilometer from the port, however, the boat collided with a fishing banca filled with clams, causing it to capsize, surviving passengers recounted.

Many passengers died immediately after the boat overturned.

As of the latest count, 27 bodies had been recovered, according to Chief Supt. Victor Boċo, Bicol police director and Regional Disaster Coordinating Council chair.

"At around 2 a.m., while the passengers were asleep, we heard the boat's engine running and we noticed the boat was sailing away from the port," survivor Gary Tagayom said.

Upside down

"Suddenly, the boat was hit by big waves, turning it upside down. My two children and wife died," he said.

The management of the shipping line earlier advised the passengers to sleep on the boat as they could not yet sail.

Ramil Kilat, another survivor, said that between 2 and 3 a.m., the captain told passengers that they had to get away from the port to avoid the big waves, which could slap the boat against the dock, wrecking the vessel.

It was while the boat was sailing away that the disaster occurred.

Clinging to a rope

"It happened so fast. All we knew was that the boat had already capsized," Kilat said.

Some of the passengers, clinging to a rope, were able to scramble to the other boat carrying the clams.

"I was one of those who held on tight to the rope. I was able to transfer to the other boat, a smaller one," Kilat recalled. "I thought it was already my end. Thank God, I'm still alive."

Floodwaters have begun to recede in many of the affected areas but some places in Southern Luzon still remained without power and communication.

In Oriental Mindoro, authorities declared a state of calamity in the City of Calapan.

Aid from Malacañang

Saying that it sympathized with the victims of Caloy, Malacañang yesterday gave its assurance that the government would provide them assistance and support.

"President Arroyo is personally on top of the situation in seeing to it that the national disaster plan is on track to minimize loss of lives and damage to property in the wake of typhoon Caloy," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said.

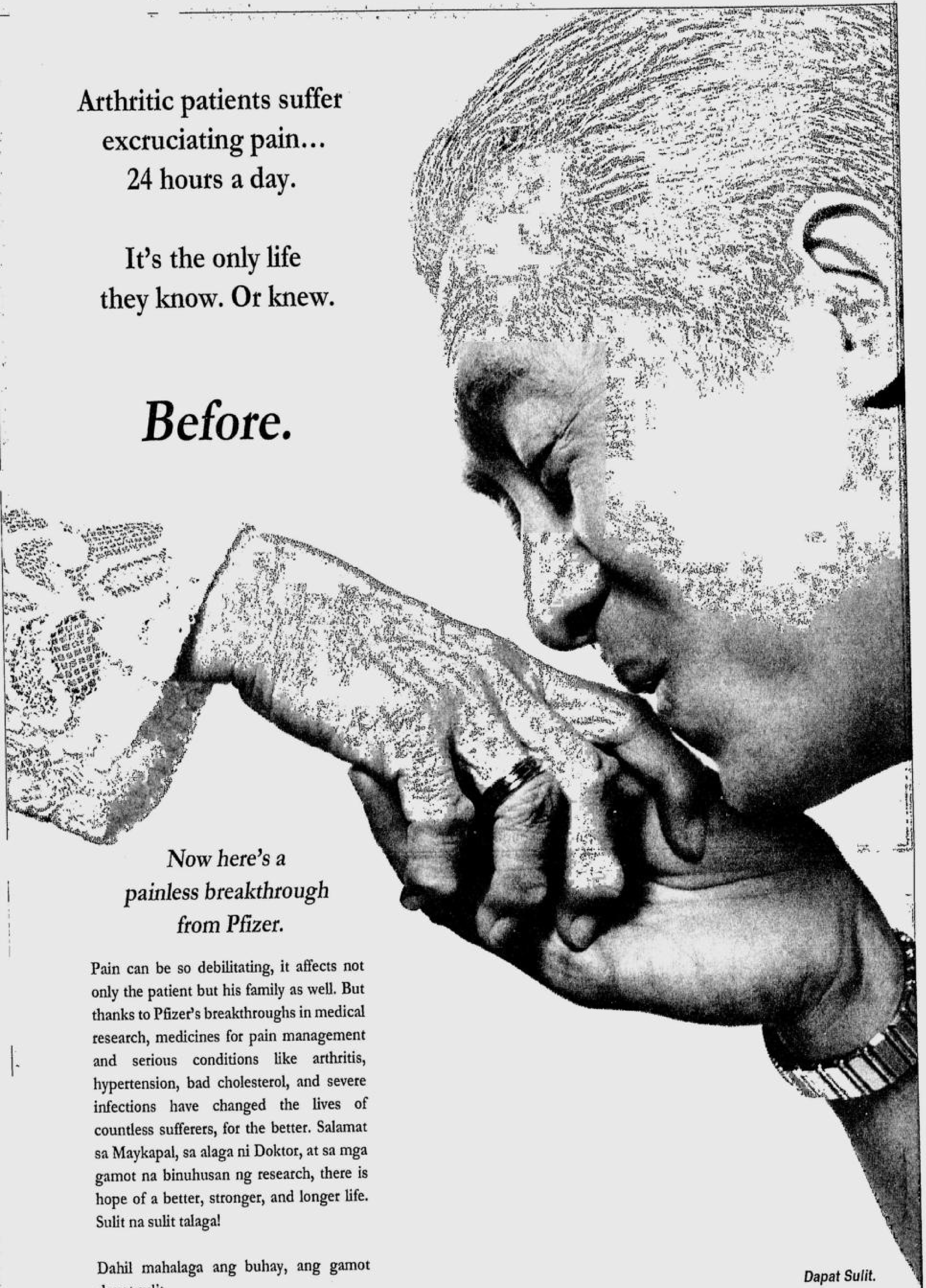
In his weekly newspaper column, Bunye said that the government was prepared for any contingencies, now that the rainy season was here.

"All hands of the national and local governments are on deck to check and warn of disaster-prone areas, provide relief and rehab to affected communities, assist stranded commuters and keep an eye on the prices of essential commodities," he said.

Hazardous billboards

Bunye said that Ms Arroyo, concerned with public safety, also wanted the giant billboards in Metro Manila to be inspected by authorities after several of them were damaged by the storm.

He said the President had ordered the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority to coordinate with the Departments of Transportation and Communications and Public Works and Highways as well as local authorities to check the billboards "that could pose a serious threat to the public during strong typhoons." *With reports from Luige A. del Puerto and Madonna Virola, Gerald Querubin and Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



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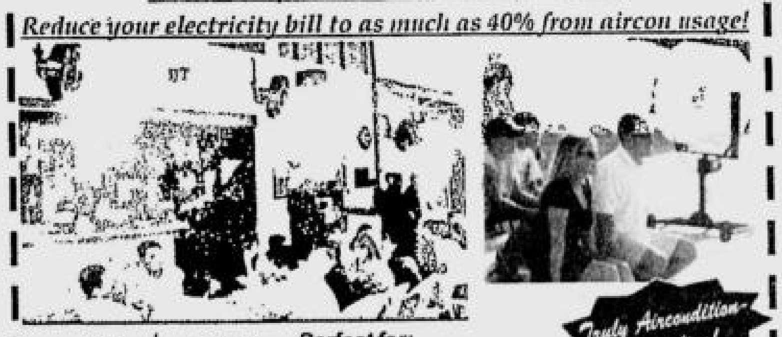

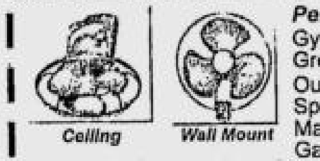

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Pinoy crewman killed

LONDON—A 40-year-old Filipino crew member of the luxury liner Queen Mary II died Friday following a fight with another Filipino crew member below decks, British police reported.

Hampshire Police boarded the ship on Saturday to investigate the incident as well as take the suspect, a 49-year-old Filipino man, into custody. Neither the victim nor the suspect were identified.

The victim died at about 3:00 p.m. Friday as he was being airlifted to a hospital in the Netherlands, said a spokesperson for the Hampshire Police, which is conducting the investigation because the 345-meter French-built liner is registered in Southampton, on England's south coast.

"Four detectives and three crime scene investigators have flown to Norway and boarded the ship at Bergen," the spokesperson said. "While en route back to the United Kingdom, the police officers will be speaking to any members of the ship's crew who may have witnessed the incident."

The vessel's owners, Cunard, are in the process of contacting the dead man's next of kin in the Philippines.

He suffered serious head injuries after an alleged row with another member of the staff, said Cunard spokesperson Eric Flounders.

"The cruise will continue as normal and none of our passengers have been affected. It is due back in Southampton on Wednesday," he said.

Cunard's flagship was launched in September 2003 and made its maiden voyage in January 2004. It can carry up to 2,620 passengers, with a crew of 1,253.

With AFP

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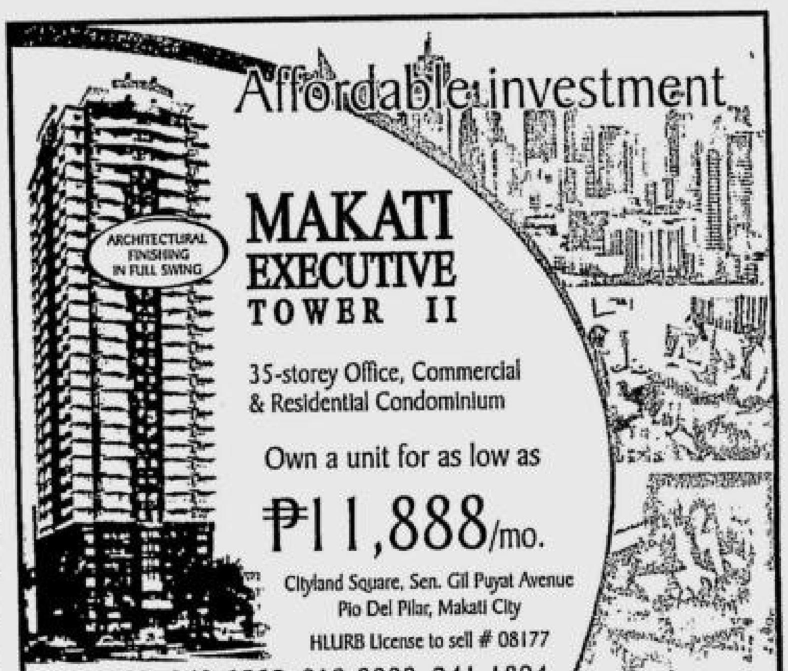

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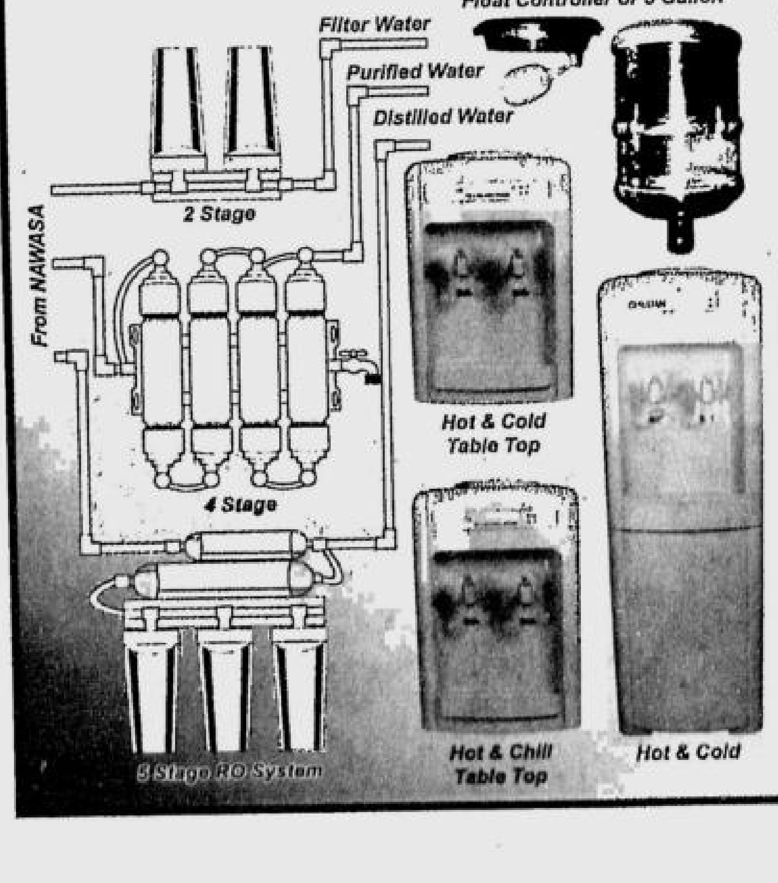

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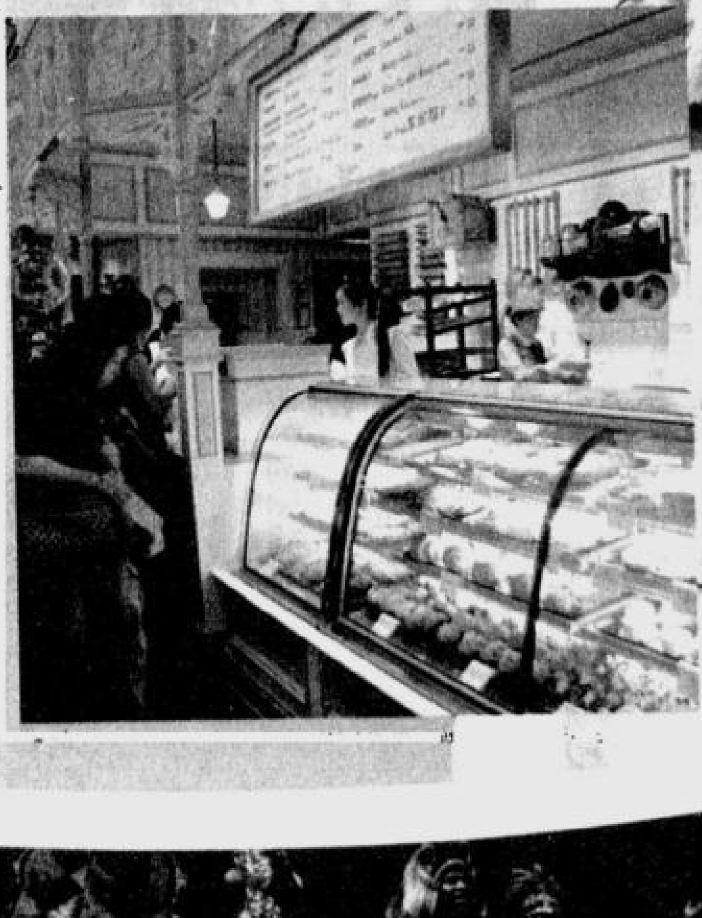

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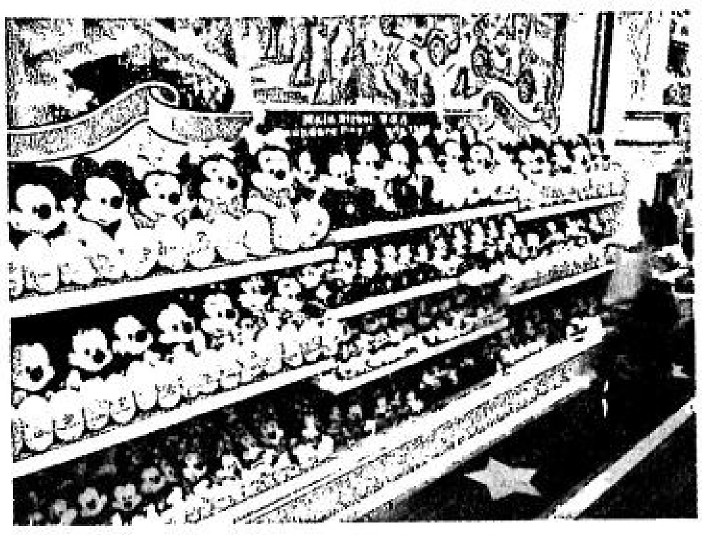

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Saudi Arabia's reasons

EDITORIAL

THE MASS PARDON OF HUNDREDS OF OVERSEAS Filipino workers in Saudi Arabia, in jail for various reasons, was nothing less than a diplomatic coup. We can understand President Macapagal-Arroyo's personal description of it as a "gift" of King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, the new sovereign of the world's largest oil-exporting nation.

Now that most of the 500 or so OFWs pardoned during President Arroyo's state visit are back in the country (according to Malacañang, another 200 were pardoned in February, in anticipation of the visit), we are all obliged to understand the causes that led to their release.

In general terms, the number of Filipinos in Saudi jails is a source of concern; it is important to realize, however, that the percentage of OFWs in jail is less than one-tenth of one percent of the total number of Filipinos working in the Saudi kingdom. In other words, there is no epidemic of sudden lawlessness by Filipinos in Saudi Arabia. It is equally important to understand that many of the detained are in jail for light offenses (say, for drinking alcohol) or indeed through no fault of their own (because the agencies that hired them ran afoul of government regulations).

The circumstances of their release, as recalled by Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas, were fittingly dramatic; they will fill a few pages in the memoirs of not a few public officials. According to Sto. Tomas, Ms Arroyo asked King Abdullah point blank: "If it were possible—[could] she bring home 50 OFWs jailed for light offenses?" The King's reply was dispiriting: "No, you are not bringing home 50." As it turned out, what he meant was she could bring home **more than** 50. "Our spirits were dampened, but then he continued, 'I'm asking the interior minister to see to it that you bring home as many people as you can take,'" Sto. Tomas recalled.

The magnitude of the mass pardon certainly surpasses Malacañang's highest expectations. Only the most churlish or most ideologically driven of Arroyo critics will begrudge her this diplomatic victory. The emotional intensity that surrounded the President when she met with the first batch of returnees in Villamor Airbase was proof that she did right by them. But this needs to be said: The OFWs were released to meet Saudi Arabia's own interests.

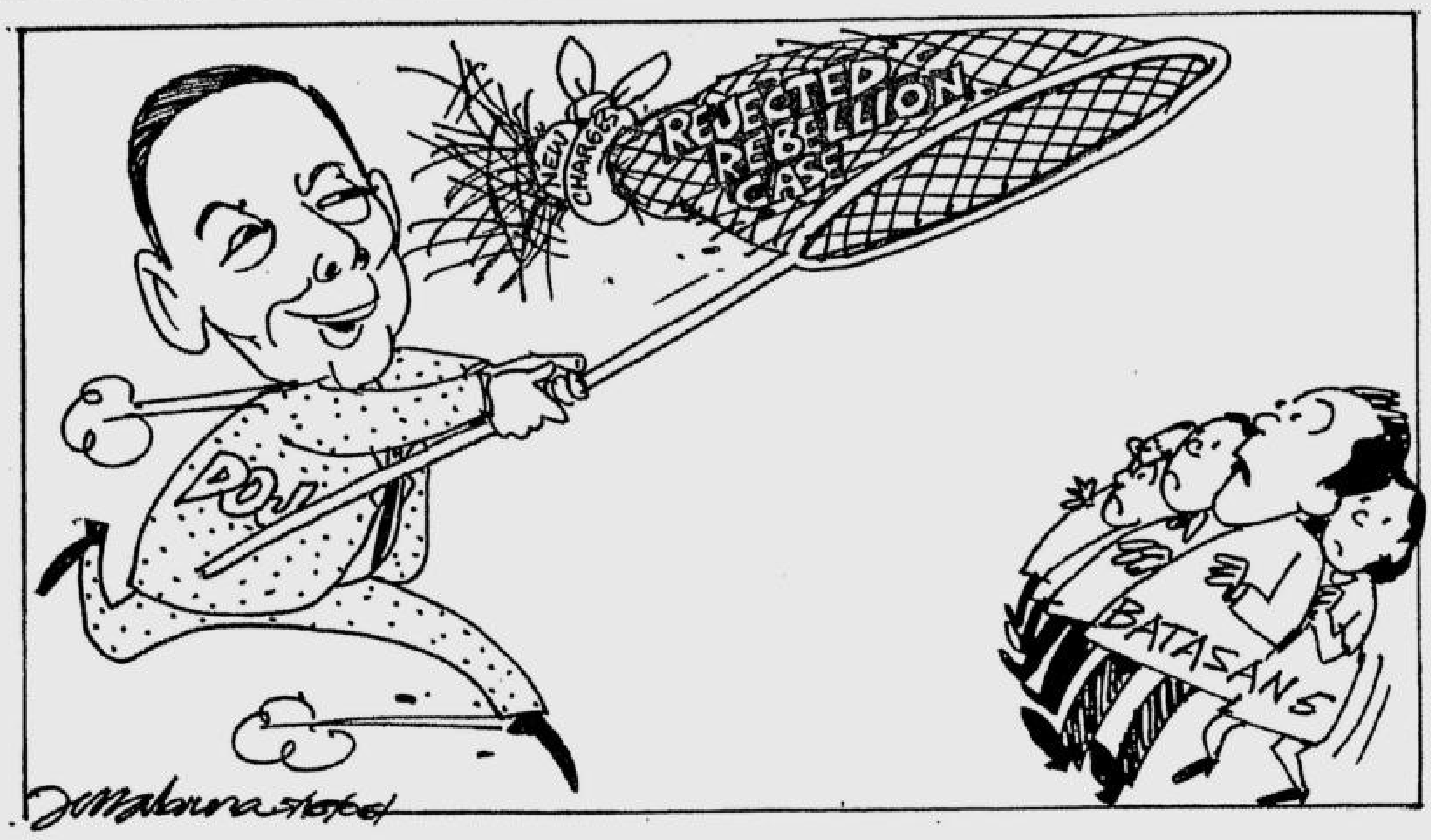
To be sure, we do not quarrel with Sto. Tomas' reading of the events: "It's an affirmation of the king's high regard for the Filipino's inherent goodness despite the fact that some of us violated some of their customs and regulations." She added: "It's his way of saying, 'Yes, there were some of you who may not have respected our laws, but most of you we respect and appreciate.'"

Well, the old joke rings truer than ever: If the million OFWs working in the kingdom were to go home overnight, the Saudi Arabian economy might grind to a halt. (At least until a surge of Indonesian and other workers take up the slack.)

But it is in the interests of Saudi Arabia, under the leadership of King Abdullah (who ran the country in the last years of the ailing King Fahd, before finally taking over in his own name last August), to continue to cultivate an image of moderation. It was then-Crown Prince Abdullah, for instance, who proposed a radical peace proposal in 2002 that would have ended the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. (Both Arab states and Israel shot it down.) The unprecedented mass release of detained foreign workers can only add to the reputation of the new king, whose privileged role in the Islamic world, as custodian of Islam's two holiest sites, is venerable indeed. (But it must also be pointed out that the savings in detention costs, for an economy whose welfare system is under heavy strain, cannot be inconsiderable.)

Not least, it is also in the kingdom's interest to develop stronger relations with its sources of labor; rapid demographic change and falling oil income in the 1990s cut Saudi Arabia's once-high per capita GDP by almost three-fourths. Welcoming Philippine investors to the kingdom, as two Saudi governors have suggested to Sto. Tomas, can only be sound economic policy.

It is in this context then that we should welcome the mass pardon; it was a convergence of national interests.



Mansions in La Mesa for MWSS execs

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO GRANTED executive clemency to more than 100 death convicts in Bilibid Prisons and obtained the release of almost 200 Filipino prisoners jailed in Saudi Arabia. I overheard some people arguing at a party over the records of Presidents Ramos and Arroyo regarding criminals. FVR was not able to save even one condemned prisoner, Flor Contemplacion, in Singapore, one said. In fact, he didn't even try to save her. She was eventually executed. GMA, on the other hand, saved more than a hundred criminals from execution and had about 200 more released from Saudi jails. Why did the two Filipino presidents act so differently, he asked.

Well, you have to bear in mind that FVR is a former policeman who headed the PC-INP, replied another. He, therefore, was an enemy of criminals. GMA, on the other hand, was only taking care of her colleagues.

This reminds me of a joke sent to me by text: An Arab reporter was interviewing the Saudi King.

"Why in Allah's name did you release Filipino criminals to President Arroyo?" he asked.

The King replied: "I just wanted them to be with their leader."

* * *

Joking aside, the release of the 200 Filipino prisoners is the only positive result of GMA's expensive trip to Saudi Arabia. Malacañang also trumpeted that the Saudi King had promised GMA all the oil that we need. But Malacañang didn't say that the oil would be at the Saudi price and if we have the dollars to pay for it.

Malacañang also didn't say that GMA was rebuffed on her request for Philippine membership as an observer in the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). Nur Misuari's Moro National Liberation Front is an observer there but not GMA's government. The Saudis tricked her by giving her the criminals, but denied her the things really important to our economy and sovereignty—cheap oil and an observer's seat in the OIC.

* * *

Another trickster is the board of directors of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System. We are now opposing a housing project for MWSS union members inside the La Mesa Dam watershed, but unknown to us, the MWSS board has, very quietly, already finished another housing project for its executives in another portion of La Mesa. In fact, the mansions—not ordinary houses—are already in use.

The housing for rank-and-file employees was probably relocated to a site above the reservoir—where it would pollute the water for Metro Manila—so that the executives can use the original site downstream. What a dirty trick.

Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes should have the MWSS board investigated for that trick. By the way, he is already two steps behind in this La Mesa scandal. He is only now proposing that the "reservoir be declared a protected area." He said he would form a team of experts to do a "protected area suitability assessment of the La Mesa watershed."

Huli ka na, secretary. The whole La Mesa watershed, not only the reservoir, is already a protected area. All watersheds are. And under the provisions of the National Integrated Protected Areas System (Nipas) Act, no portion of a protected area like La Mesa can be segregated and titled to private individuals. Not even a proclamation of the President can supersede that. Recently, the Supreme Court declared a proclamation of President Ramos illegal. FVR had set aside a small portion of the Marikina Watershed Reservation in San Matero, Rizal, as a garbage dump. He could not do that, the high tribunal said. It is a violation of the law, the Court said and ordered the return of the dump back to the public domain.

If the President cannot segregate a part of a watershed, how could a mere board of directors? The board approval of the housing projects for MWSS executives and union members inside the La Mesa watershed are therefore illegal, and the lot titles awarded to beneficiaries are null and void from the very beginning.

With its new decision, the Supreme Court also voided, in effect, its earlier decision in favor of the contract between the MWSS and the two labor unions.

While the earlier decision has become final and executory, it can no longer be enforced because of two "supervening events" that rendered that decision unenforceable.

There is a principle in law that a "supervening event" that occurs after a decision has become final and executory can make it impossible to implement. (To "supervene" is to come or happen as something additional, unexpected or foreign to the normal course of events.) Also recently, in Flores vs. Ligon, the Supreme Court declared that a final and executory decision—giving the lease of a cockpit to Flores—can no longer be enforced because Ligon had already bought the cockpit.

In the La Mesa Dam case, there is not only one but three "supervening events:" the passage of the Nipas Act, the transfer of the project site from below the reservoir to above it, and the findings of a team of experts from the University of the Philippines that the housing project would pollute the water in the reservoir no matter what mitigating measures are done. Remember that the Supreme Court decision that has become final and executory was only about the legality of the contract between the MWSS and the labor unions, not on its conflict with the Nipas Act (not enacted yet at the time the decision was made), and on the risk of the project's polluting the water (no study had yet been made by experts then).

It should be emphasized that the union members and executives are not being deprived of their housing projects. They will only be relocated to other sites where they will not pose any danger to the environment. In fact, the unions have been offered 116 hectares of land in Antipolo, double the size of the original 58 hectares in La Mesa, which is a good exchange.

Obsessions

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

PROSPERO NOGRALES IS A REPRESENTATIVE and chair of the House committee on rules. But what exactly he represents and what rules he wants to govern this country with, well, you see it in his comments on the Senate. Breaking parliamentary etiquette, if not rules, he launched a broadside on the Senate last week after its members vowed to pursue investigations into the "Hello Garci" tape.

"Their obsession to oust President Arroyo has blinded their primary task to legislate *(sic)*." He called on the senators to pursue instead only those matters that aid legislation.

The senators, of course, have already replied to this. Manuel Villar pointed out that the Senate was busy with important legislative matters like the budget. "We have not been remiss in our duty." Richard Gordon and Nene Pimentel were far more trenchant: "We (senators)," said Gordon, "are obsessed with protecting the rights of the people; obviously, Nograles is only interested in protecting the rights of the President." Pimentel did not mince words: "It's part of the Senate's job to seek an end to a corrupt administration."

Seemingly a minor tiff, the source of that tiff—which is Nograles' view of the world and the Senate's place in it—bears commenting on as it says something about current thinking, or the lack of it, in this country. The first thing it reminded me of was Imelda's own comments many years ago about the PCGG's efforts to recover the wealth she and her husband reportedly stole from their countrymen, and the Department of Justice's efforts to bring her and her ilk to justice. She said she and her ilk were being harassed and persecuted. She said the Cory government was obsessed with vengeance.

I said then that if that was the case, then the PCGG should harass her some more and the DOJ should persecute her some more. I said if that was the case, then the Cory government should be more obsessed about vengeance, seeing to it that the Marcoses and their cronies were jailed. I said then that we should look at the Jews' obsession to scour the ends of the earth, down to the most impenetrable jungles of Brazil, to bring the very last Nazi who participated in the attempted annihilation and actual decimation of their race, to answer for his crimes. That kind of obsession, the obsession to punish crime and uphold justice, is awe-inspiring. That kind of obsession, the obsession to right wrongs and restore the balance of the universe, is worth emulating.

Alas, we were not equal to the task, or the obsession. In the name of reconciliation and Christian charity, concepts Christ himself might have objected to violently, we allowed the guilty to go scot-free, and so left them to harass and persecute us to this day.

I do not know why any senator should have to defend his institution's heroic effort to ferret out the truth by pointing to other matters they are doing, least of all the budget. It's high time we understood the true meaning of that phrase "in aid of legislation." The Senate does not waste the taxpayers' money by inquiring into the "Hello Garci" tapes, it makes every centavo of it count. On the contrary, it is the House that wastes every centavo of it by attempting to block the search for truth, which it did during the impeachment bid and which it does now through the kind of ululations Nograles mouths. The first aids legislation, the second only oppression.

At the very least that is so because it's idiotic to make laws that nobody will follow. What is the purpose of laws? It is to give society peace and justice, freedom and progress, hope and happiness. How can you do that when you have a President who, nearly all the citizens believe, stole the vote, with fully 65 percent of them demanding she disappear from view; a President who is determined to steal the country's freedom as well (EO 464, CPR, 1017), to prevent the people from punishing her for stealing the vote? Example is the best teacher of all, not laws. Example is the most forceful persuader of all, not laws. You can make the finest laws ever conceived by man, but with GMA there, all they'll amount to is a pile of bull. All they'll show is that there is one set of laws for the citizens and another for GMA.

At the very most, what kind of laws will you make with the premise that it's all right for the highest official of the land to behave like a thug, unmindful of society's laws, the most elemental of which is to respect the vote? What kind of laws will you make with the premise that it's all right for a legitimate nation to accept an illegitimate President because "there is no alternative"? That is your seed, all the laws you'll make will be as fruit that withers in the vine. That is your well, all the water you'll draw up will be as poison that chokes the blood. All the meetings and discussions you hold in your committees will not aid law, they will aid *kalokohan*. They will not aid progress, they will aid pillage. They will not aid the common good, they will aid uncommon evil.

The senators do not do this nation ill by ferreting out the truth about the last elections, they do it well. They do not show an obsession in ousting GMA, they show an obsession in exorcising an evil that has overwhelmed the body and soul of this nation. They do not shirk their duty like treacherous cowards, they rise to meet it like ardent lovers. I cannot imagine anything the senators can be doing to aid legislation—no, sanity itself—more than ridding this country of lies and deceit, more than arresting our fall into a pit where the thirst for justice becomes a sordid obsession and the thirst for power a lofty calling, where righting wrongs becomes selfishness and wronging rights becomes public service.

What can I say? Be better and more obsessed.

ID Systems: from AO 308 to EO 420

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

IN 1998, THE SUPREME COURT STRUCK DOWN as unconstitutional President Ramos' Administrative Order No. 308—titled "Adoption Of A National Computerized Identification Reference System"—for being a usurpation of legislative power and a violation of the right to privacy. It would have required every Filipino to carry a brand which would be preserved in a centralized and computerized system.

Recently, the Supreme Court upheld the validity of Executive Order No. 420, "Requiring All Government Agencies And Government-owned And Controlled Corporations To Streamline And Harmonize Their Identification (ID) Systems, And Authorizing For Such Purpose The Director-General, National Economic And Development Authority To Implement The Same, And For Other Purposes." This executive order was also challenged as a usurpation of legislative function and a violation of the right to privacy. However, the Court ruled that EO 420, unlike AO 308, did not create something out of nothing but merely ordered the consolidation of all existing IDs in offices under the President. The Court justified EO 420 as an exercise of the President's constitutional power of control over all executive agencies. As to the issue that it is a violation of the right to privacy, the Court pointed out that the existing IDs required by government agencies had never been challenged and that whatever "privacy implications" there might be were far outweighed by the benefits to be gained in terms of cost and efficiency. The Court also pointed out that even countries which have refused to have computerized national IDs—e.g., the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, the Nordic countries and Sweden—have sectoral cards for health, social and other public services.

While the high tribunal's decision on EO 420 reached near unanimity, I do not think it will end all questioning of government ID systems. Why is this so?

Some time ago I came across a brief item on the right to privacy. The thrust of the article was that anyone who still thinks that the right to privacy is protected by law must be either naive or hopelessly out-of-touch. The article mentioned an Aaron Nabil who, for $222, purchased public records from the Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles (which included names, addresses and birth dates) and made them available to the general public via the World Wide Web. The record had been set up in such a way that if you punch in a license plate, you learn all sorts of interesting information about the owner of a vehicle. Naturally there was an outcry against it. But can that happen here once government has effectively computerized information? You bet it can.

But what is the protection against the diffusion of private information? More precisely, can our present law cope with the swift changes taking place in communications technology? My opinion is that it cannot. Hence, one benefit we can derive from AO 308 and EO 420 is that it can alert Congress to action.

My own preliminary look into the matter has made me realize that, historically, law has been very slow in responding to threats to privacy. Recall that the existence of a right to privacy was first broached in a scholarly article written in 1890 by two professors of Harvard University—Louis D. Brandeis and Samuel D. Warren. They wrote about "the right to be let alone." But the Court initially found the right to be too broad to be enforced and urged legislators to enact statutes on the subject.

Even as late as 1928, the US Supreme Court did not consider wiretapping unconstitutional. It was only in 1967 that this doctrine was abandoned. Meanwhile, the US Congress had enacted the Federal Communications Act of 1934 which prohibited wiretapping. This probably was the source of the guarantee against the violation of the privacy of communication and correspondence found in our 1935 and present Constitution. This has since been strengthened by statute.

The guarantee, however, is only for privacy as found in communication. But there are other areas of privacy, and the law on this subject is undeveloped. As far as our constitutional law is concerned, aside from the protection of the privacy of communication, the only other clear protection is against physical intrusion through searches and seizures.

US constitutional protection has also been extended to privacy in marital relationships. But technology has developed far beyond what early constitutional formulators could imagine and, on this, the law has a lot of catching up to do.

Even if the information contained in data banks is accurate, it still will face the danger of misuse or abuse. When a person gives a piece of information (about himself) needed for a particular transaction—whether with government or private institutions—he gives that information for a specific purpose. But modern technology can make such information accessible to persons for whom the information was not meant. Commercial establishments, for instance, can get hold of names and addresses and interests and make use of such information for profit. The least commercial establishments can do is "spam" the mail boxes, physical or electronic, of unwilling victims with annoying advertisements. The criminally inclined, too—within or outside the government, can make use of data bank information for purposes of harassment or blackmail.

The challenge for Congress, therefore, is very clear. With the aid of computer experts and IT managers, Congress should look into the implications of a government-sponsored ID system on privacy rights, and formulate legislation that can protect citizens not only against executive, but also against criminal, intrusion and abuse.

India and Iran: a case of double standard

WORLD VIEW

Richard N. Haass

ALL BUT LOST IN THE CONTROVERSIES surrounding Iraq and Iran is a major initiative involving a third "I" country: India. Sometime this year, the US Congress is likely to vote on the "US-India Civil Nuclear Cooperation Initiative," which was signed when President Bush visited New Delhi in March.

The agreement paves the way for American exports of nuclear technologies and materials for use in India's civilian nuclear program. In return, India has pledged to open 14 of its 22 existing and planned nuclear power reactors, as well as all future civil reactors, to international inspection.

The agreement matters for at least two reasons. First, the accord symbolizes the arrival of a new geopolitical relationship between the world's two largest democracies that were often on opposite sides during the Cold War. This development may be of historic importance if it leads not only to a deepening of US-Indian technical and economic ties, but also to the strengthening of their ability to tackle regional and global challenges, ranging from the proliferation of nuclear weapons to climate change.

But the proposed US-India accord is attracting notice for a second, and far more controversial, reason: the concern that it could weaken, rather than advance, efforts to resist the spread of nuclear weapons. Critics charge that the agreement undermines the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) by letting India have its cake (nuclear weapons) and eat it, too (by giving it access to nuclear fuel and technology). They allege that the agreement creates a double standard, according to which only some countries may possess nuclear weapons.

To be fair, the critics are right, at least in part. There is a double standard at work. But there is nothing new about that. The NPT, some four decades old, is based on a double standard that gives only five countries—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States—the right (for how long is not defined) to possess nuclear weapons.

Moreover, the world seems to have learned to tolerate the reality that three other countries—Israel, India and Pakistan—also possess nuclear weapons. Where the critics of the proposed US-India accord are wrong is in charging that such a double standard is wrong when it comes to India because it opens the way for countries, such as North Korea and Iran, to develop nuclear weapons.

Not all countries are equal. India is a democracy. Transparency and the rule of law are the norm, and its government does all it can to fight terrorism. There is no reason to believe that India will pass on nuclear fuel, technology, or weapons to any other party or country; on the contrary, it is committed to preventing this.

This is not true of either North Korea or Iran. The former is arguably the most closed, tyrannical and militarized society in the world, with a long record of irresponsible exports of dangerous technologies. Iran offers official support to terrorists and its president has threatened publicly to destroy Israel. The world has good reason to be far less tolerant of what North Korea or Iran does in the realm of nuclear weapons and to reject their calls for equal treatment with India.

Indeed, if there is a danger in the proposed US-India accord, it is the possibility that either North Korea or Iran might conclude that it is only a matter of time before the world comes to accept their nuclear status. Here the United States and others must disabuse them.

The message seems to have gotten through to North Korea which, despite its probable ability to conduct a nuclear weapons test, has not done so. China, the transit route for most of what enters and leaves North Korea, understands that were North Korea to cross this red line, it would risk US military reprisal and possibly lead Japan and/or South Korea to rethink their nuclear weapons policy. None of these outcomes is in China's strategic interest.

Unfortunately, there is no country in a position to influence Iran to the extent that China can influence North Korea. The situation is made more difficult by the fact that oil prices are already at a record high, while US ground forces are busy in Iraq, thus reducing the credibility of American military threats to Iran.

Iran's leaders, though, would be unwise to proceed with an unconstrained nuclear program and discount the possibility of US military action. This said, a US preventive strike at Iran's nuclear-related installations is not in the interest of either country. The potential for loss of life, for Iranian retaliation and for global economic disruption is high.

Both countries—indeed, the world—would be better served by a diplomatic outcome in which Iran accepted severe limits on its uranium enrichment activity and agreed to place all of its nuclear-related facilities under highly intrusive international inspection in exchange for economic benefits and security assurances. Better yet if Iran turned to Russia or the IAEA for uranium-generated electric power. Direct US-Iran talks should be convened if they must bring about any such agreement.

Iran's calculations will not be affected by what happens between the United States and India. Iranian policy will be shaped by its domestic politics, by the ability of the international community to present a united front, and by the willingness of the United States to put forth a reasonable diplomatic offer against the backdrop of sanctions and potential military strikes, should diplomacy fail. The stakes could hardly be greater. It is Iran, not India, that we should all be worried about.

Project Syndicate

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Infant nation

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

WROTE ST. PAUL IN CORINTHIANS 13:11, "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child. Now that I have become a man, I have put away childish things."

One of the privileges of adulthood is making choices, whether they be right or wrong. When people try to make decisions for me, I protest. Guidance, on the other hand, is an altogether different thing: it is to be appreciated, and those in a position to give it should be encouraged.

When I was living in the United States as a teenager, my father—before allowing me to watch a movie—always consulted the parish bulletin published by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' Office for Film and Broadcasting. The bulletin rated movies "according to artistic merit and moral suitability." Every movie contained a synopsis, criticism according to Catholic principles, the standard film rating and a rating according to the Church's own classification. Today, films are rated by the American Catholic hierarchy as follows: A-I—general patronage; A-II—adults and adolescents; A-III—adults; L—limited adult audience, or films whose problematic content many adults would find troubling (L replaced the previous classification, A-IV); and O—morally offensive. All the fun movies tended to be rated "O," which meant I never got to watch them when my father was around.

I don't know if studiously observing the moral injunctions of Catholic reviews made either my father and me morally better people, but it certainly salved his sense of Christian duty as a parent and, in retrospect, that should be as far as parental controls over children are concerned. I am old-fashioned enough to believe that prior to the age of 18, the decisions of parents and schools as to what children can and cannot read and watch are pretty much unquestionable. The formative years of any child are too crucial; it would be imprudent to abandon the young to the shifting tides of popular culture.

Indeed, the problem is that there exists a growing vacuum of authority, in which parents and schools blame each other for not doing enough of their jobs. I hear this all the time from teachers who claim they have to take up more and more of what used to be purely parental duties when it comes to the guidance of children; and from parents, of course, who complain that the schools aren't what they used to be.

It is different in college; this is why parents agonize over the question where to send their children for a college education. Where education was once about instructing, college is more about learning. By this, I simply mean that as a matter of age; students in college start to learn to handle information in a more adult, if critical, manner—and so to make adult choices. What was once circumscribed purely by Church, family and school, now becomes an experience in being part of a larger society. The State becomes, in many ways, the arbiter of how the individual and society interact. Parental and even church authority are no longer supreme; the laws are—though ideally, the laws should allow parents and churches to hold sway where they should—at home and in the heart.

There is, of course, secular morality: our laws and the State have lists of do's and don'ts every bit as extensive—and often, as restrictive, even oppressive—as any parental or sectarian moral code. Secular society tries to be inclusive—it is meant to be generous, and it is meant to uphold the liberty of the individual. Community standards are upheld to the extent that they remain relevant to the community—but unlike the eternal, unchangeable standards of a faith, they can be challenged—and they change, as they should, because this is how societies progress.

Which is why I am against the banning of books, artworks, music, plays and films. I am not against groups issuing or publishing guidelines, ratings and reviews based on their beliefs, for the guidance of like-minded people. That is part of free speech (as is calling for boycotts). Film boards taking scissors to the prints of films, or government bodies taking on the moral position of a particular sect is an altogether different matter.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita thought aloud that a ban on the movie "The Da Vinci Code" would be OK; Bishop Ramon Arguelles petitioned the MTRCB to ban the film; the city council of Lucena City passed a resolution condemning the showing of the movie; all these and more are passing on to the State an obligation that more properly should be exercised by priests and ministers. Msgr. Pedro Quitorio was more prudent: "We neither oppose or endorse its showing," he said of the film, explaining that "We don't want to ride to the commercialization and marketing hype ... the bottom line here is money—it's not religion."

Better yet, concerned Filipino Catholics can do as the Americans will do. Starting the week of May 21, an hour-long special, produced by NewGroup Media for the US bishops' Catholic Communication Campaign, will air on NBC network affiliates. Called "Jesus Decoded," the special is a "clear-minded rebuttal of the spurious claims made in Dan Brown's thriller ... Filmed on location in Israel, Turkey and Italy, the program includes interviews with biblical scholars and art historians who also provide an authoritative antidote to all those pseudoscholarly books [claiming] to tell the 'hidden' history of Christianity. But rather than a point-by-point rebuttal of the novel or its author, the special uses 'The Da Vinci Code' as a springboard to present authentic Catholic teaching about Jesus, the Church, Holy Scripture and the origins of Christianity." Putting your money where your faith is—this is more secularly acceptable than calling for an old-fashioned book-burning—or film ban.

Into the breach

COMMENTARY

Eugenia Duran Apostol

IN 2002, THE FOUNDATION FOR WORLDWIDE PEOPLE Power had already completed the "Lakas Sambayanan" video documentary. It was meant to complement our 1997 landmark work "Batas Militar."

We had also published Angela Stuart Santiago's "Edsa: Walang Himala" and co-convened the Legacies of the Marcos Dictatorship series of conferences with the GZO Foundation, Ateneo University and the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility.

Yet we could not help but notice the growing indifference—particularly among the youth—to that time in our history when our courage as one people earned the world's respect and admiration.

So, around this time four years ago, the FWWPP board quietly convened to revisit our mandate to keep People Power relevant through changing times.

To help us in our task, Fely Arroyo, Edilberto "DJ" De Jesus, Pepe Abueva, Del Lazaro and I invited leading personalities from the academe, business and the NGO community to share their perspectives and insights on People Power with us. Butchie Lim Ayuyao—now our incumbent president—joined us in those discussions where she shared her expertise in the fields of business and education.

We distilled two lessons from those series of meetings. The first one was as obvious as it was pervasive: Poverty was keeping our people from reaching their full potential. Because of poverty, many Filipinos are unable to provide their children with the key that unlocks the door to advancement: quality education.

The second lesson was a bit harder to discern, ironically because the complex issue of education obscured it. The experts we invited all held the view that People Power is a vital component for genuine social transformation. They said, If there was a way by which People Power's civic values could take root and flourish in every community, we could be well on our way to arresting poverty's corrupting influence.

But there was such a vehicle, the academics replied—that is the public education system. Run by the country's largest bureaucracy and fraught with a seemingly open-ended set of problems, the public schools are nevertheless at the frontline of national development.

The strategy thus presented itself. Through People Power, mustered at the community level, we could all pitch in to make our public schools qualitatively better. At the same time, empowered teachers could instill People Power's positive civic values at the school level—in the minds and hearts of their pupils and students. At that moment, Education Revolution was born.

We started by "adopting" the Sitio Talaga Elementary School. We spun this off from the Department of Education's Adopt-A-School flagship program that the late Bro. Andrew Gonzalez started when he became education secretary. More correctly, we attempted to bring this school and its community together so they could jointly plan and work on projects that would help improve the school's facilities and quality of instruction.

Almost at the same time, we began our pilot Mentoring the Mentors sessions for the principals and master-teachers of the Iloilo City Schools Division. A team of facilitators, led by program director Chinit Rufino, engaged the participants in a highly interactive series of activities designed to highlight the teacher's innate capacity for character formation and genuine social change.

What has happened since then?

Well, to be honest about it, public education still faces formidable odds. As of 2005, the average rating in National Achievement Tests for both public elementary and high school students still stands near 50 percent. The results of the most recent teacher proficiency exams are not very encouraging either. Many schools will still face inadequate facilities as well as shortages in teaching aids and textbooks when they open this June.

However, there are a number of new developments (since the launching in 2002 of Education Revolution) indicating that we may be about to turn the corner on the issue of quality public education.

First, there has been significant improvement in academic achievement despite the multifarious stumbling blocks to learning. In 2003, the diagnostics test results for the key subject areas hovered at 38 percent. So you can consider the 2005 average as an achievement; it may be small, but it is genuine and significant.

Also in 2003, the DepEd, under Secretary Edilberto de Jesus, was able to secure the promulgation of BIR IRR 10-2003, the implementing rules for availing of the tax incentive provisions of the Adopt-A-School Act of 1998.

The FWWPP's own Adopt-A-School initiative has evolved into the Community Action Program, this far "dynamizing" more than 200 schools in Laguna, Pampanga, Pangasinan, Negros Occidental, Cagayan de Oro, Davao City and Metro Manila.

The Mentoring the Mentors Program, meanwhile, has been enthusiastically received as far up as the regional level. We have been able to conduct sessions for regional directors and superintendents in seven regions, including the ARMM. More than a thousand teachers have experienced Mentoring the Mentors.

As I am writing this, Butchie Ayuyao is giving her closing remarks to FWWPP's second Mentoring Trainors Training Session in Tagaytay. The new facilitators coming out of these sessions will extend the reach of the Mentoring the Mentors Program even more.

This year, we have started introducing strategic planning with performance-based private sector support as core concepts in community involvement for public education. The general idea is for the school and the community to convene and draft a realistic improvement plan with specific targets, such as a 5- to 10-percent increase in reading achievement. The school and the community then use this commitment as a virtual bargaining chip to draw in whatever resources the school needs.

The best part, however, is the fact that more and more people are now seriously looking into making education a priority in their respective communities. Even major business organizations, including the INQUIRER, are beginning to rethink their corporate social responsibility programs along the lines of spurring consistent academic improvement. Some very notable examples are Ramon Sy's Ibank and UCPB, Doris Magsaysay Ho's Magsaysay Maritime Corporation, the Ayala Foundation, Petron and Chevron (formerly Caltex), the SM Foundation (particularly the one in Cebu with Marissa Fernan), the CBK Power Company, and practically every member of the League of Corporate Foundations.

Truth to tell, the social development arms of many private business groups are now starting to veer away from the usual PR-intensive doles programs in favor of the activities that foster better learning outcomes.

I would like to think that the FWWPP has played a substantive, though small, role in the drive toward making education our best weapon against poverty. Our efforts will continue until the Education Revolution becomes a genuine national movement.

Once more, into the breach...

(You may send e-mail to the author at edapostol@fwwpp.org.)

Good news from Supreme Court

AT LAST, GOOD NEWS! THE SUPREME Court speaks to and not for the President of the Republic of the Philippines.

In a world of imbalance, discrimination, injustice and outright deception, it is refreshing to see an entity clarifying, reminding and even correcting Malacañang.

Rubber stamp democracies are a plague in what is supposed to be a free world. Freedom is a highly priced commodity for the high-heeled and jet-setting elite of the world, especially for those who own and run corporations and for their powerful political counterparts.

This was the story of martial law in the Philippines. This was the essence of President Marcos' Proclamation 1081. With PD 1081, Marcos reigned supreme over everything, even the courts. The Supreme Court at that time was turned into superfluity and redundancy. The favorite pastime of the Chief Justice then was to hold the First Lady's umbrella. The high court then was supreme only in name. Marcos was the supreme entity in government.

I thank Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban for voting according to his conscience.

I specifically thank him for two things: one, for cautioning against the authoritarian temptation and delusion, warning that "PP 1017 may be testing the outer limits of presidential prerogatives and the perseverance of this Court in safeguarding the people's constitutionally enshrined liberty"; two, for his sense of history, noting that "history would not forgive this court if it allows such misadventure."

I'm not saying that all our judges and justices are corrupt or easily corruptible. But I'm aware they are not beyond the lure of ambition, perk and privilege. Like other men, judges and justices have to make choices all the time. Many of these choices are of no consequence to other people. But some choices do have far-reaching consequences that affect not only the present but also our future. Most Supreme Court decisions are of this nature. And quite a few of these could spell the difference between life and death—like those involving the death penalty and the coconut levy fund.

I pity Associate Justice Dante Tinga for saying that "nothing in Proclamation 1017 or any issuance by any president since Aquino comes close to matching Proclamation 1081." His position clearly reflects not a profound intellect but a profound gratitude to the one who appointed him to the high court. Gratitude to God is a supreme virtue. Gratitude to political patrons often leads people astray.

Again, I would like to thank Chief Justice Panganiban! May he continue listening to history and his conscience. And he will be assured of the gratitude of those who seek the truth and fight for justice.

—FR. ROBERTO P. REYES

What happens now to electoral reforms?

IF THERE IS ONE GOVERNMENT institution that has consistently contributed to the Filipino's cynical attitude toward democracy, it is the Commission on Elections. After the late president-turned-dictator Ferdinand Marcos allegedly rigged the 1969 and 1983 presidential elections, the Comelec never (fully) recovered its good public image.

After a "democratic Constitution" was "promulgated by the people" during the presidency of Cory Aquino, we again heard politicians loudly accusing "winners" of poll fraud. Not even the three "successful" presidential elections that followed the 1987 elections made people trust the Comelec. Instead, those elections convinced them that the Comelec is and will forever be corrupt.

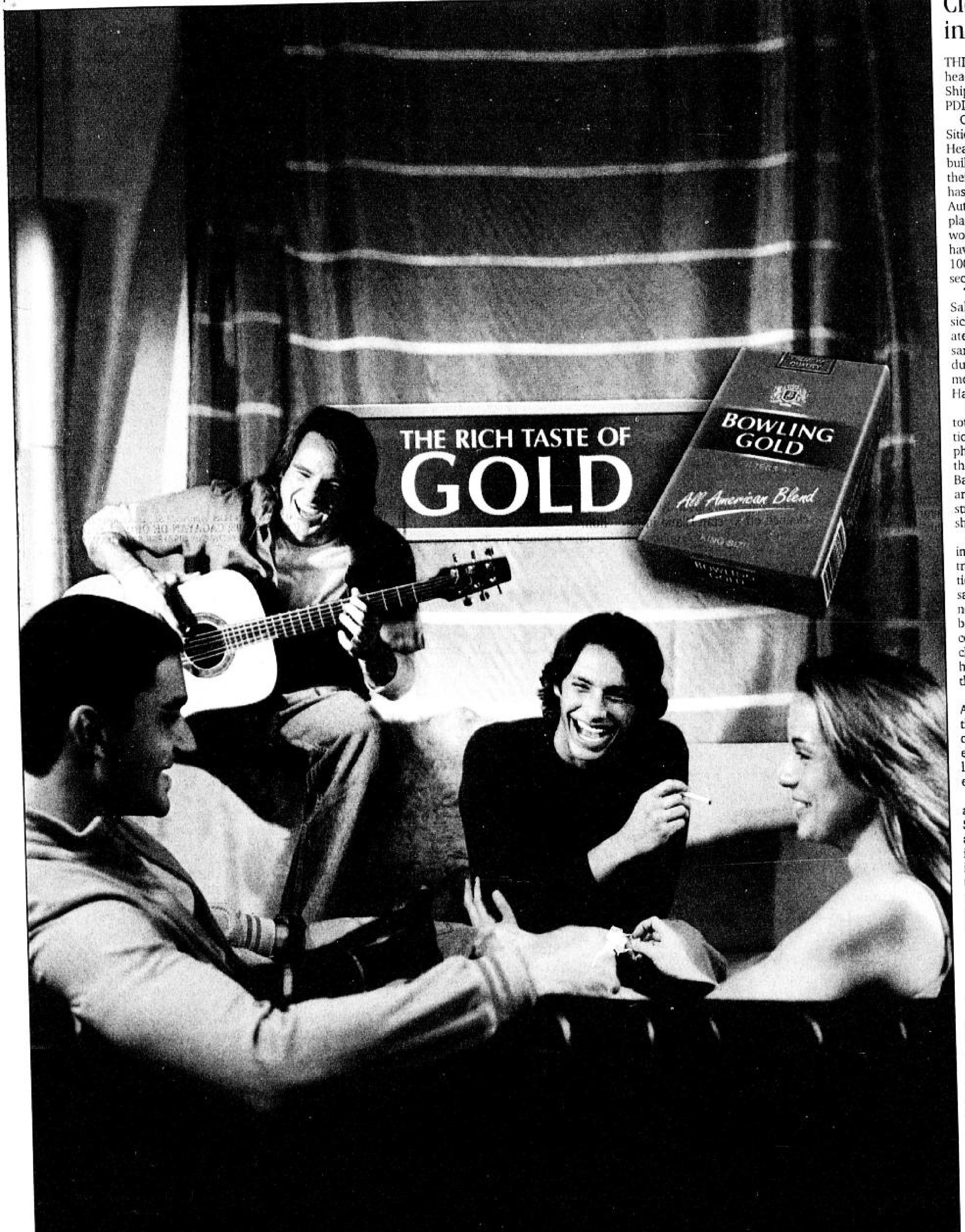
Twenty years after Edsa I, our country is fast sinking in a political quagmire—thrown there by the general perception that the President cheated to win the May 2004 elections.

We thought things were headed for the better when the President asked former Chief Justice Hilario Davide to come up with recommendations aimed at reforming our electoral system. Many Filipinos waited with bated breath for Davide's report and recommendations and for what they might be capable of reforming.

But as "fate" would have it, Malacañang released only portions of the report. We deem it necessary that the entire Davide report, not just the recommendations, be made available to the public. Not only because it was the people's money that was used to fund the Davide initiative; but also because it is Malacañang's duty to keep the people informed—that is, if we really are still in a democracy.

With the Supreme Court regaining the people's trust following its rulings on Proclamation 1017, Executive Order 464, and the infamous calibrated preemptive response (CPR), it is now Malacañang's turn to try to win back the people's trust by making public everything that is contained in the Davide report.

—JOSE C. LEDDA III, AL CONRAD ESPALDON, MARIA VITA ESPER VICEDO,
Political Science students,
University of Santo Tomas



Government Warning: Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health

Clearing operations in Subic peaceful

THIS REFERS TO THE NEWS REPORT headlined "Violence mars demolition at Subic Shipyard Project" by Allan Macatuno of the PDI Central Luzon Desk. (PDI, 5/1/06)

Contrary to reports of violence, residents of Sitio Agusuhin, the future site of the Hanjin Heavy Industries and Construction (HHIC) shipbuilding facility, accepted the check payments for their relocation, and the clearing of the area was hassle-free. Top SBMA (Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority) officials even took turns in visiting the place to ensure that the clearing operations would proceed smoothly. Also, the residents have expressed satisfaction over the additional 100 checks that have been released as part of the second wave of payments.

Two residents of Sitio Agusuhin—Armida Salceda, 65, and Mary Joy Fernandez, 8—were sick during the relocation. They were immediately brought by medics to the SBMA dispensary. Reports about people having been hurt during the clearing operations are baseless rumors meant to sow trouble and disrupt the Hanjin groundbreaking ceremonies.

Of the 370 families affected by the project, a total of 297 families have received compensation. They are now going through the relocation phase. The affected families have been offered the choice of two possible relocation sites: the Bataan Techno Park or Subic town. Both sites are within three kilometers of Agusuhin and are strategically close enough to the Hanjin site should they be employed there.

Government representatives have been working closely with the residents to ensure a smooth transfer to their new homes. In fact, their relocation was rescheduled for this summer for the sake of the schoolchildren. A new schoolhouse is now being built at the relocation site and should be finished in time for the opening of schools this coming June. Other public facilities, including a church, will also be built. For these, Hanjin has handed a donation of P2.7 million to officials of the SBMA and the town of Subic.

According to Pat Nebres, president of the Agusuhin Neighborhood Association, most of the families are pleased with the way the relocation is being conducted by Hanjin and government authorities. She said if there are problems, these are minor ones, and they will properly be resolved in due time.

The construction of the Hanjin facility has already started on a 230-hectare lot inside the Subic port. The establishment of this facility alone would create at least 30,000 direct and indirect job opportunities. It is a pity that there is little appreciation of the concerted efforts of the government and the private sector to improve the economy and living conditions of the people, and opportunists would rather put obstacles to progress.

—ARMIE C. LLAMAS, MPA,
manager, Public/Media Relations Office,
Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority,
Subic Bay Freeport Zone

I witnessed the actual clearing operation in Sitio Agusuhin and it was not peaceful at all. It was attended by soldiers who stirred fear among the residents who told me that aside from the two people whom I reported to have been hurt, there were others who were injured during the forced demolition. They also told me they never intended to disrupt the construction of the shipyard. They were fighting for just compensation and a proper relocation site.

—ALLAN MACATUNO,
correspondent,
PDI Central Luzon Desk

Respect the office

DO YOU RESPECT THE OFFICE OR THE man? Neal Cruz says "Respect is earned, not forced on others." (PDI, 5/1/06) Some people have gone into addressing the person who occupies the Office of the President by her first name, or nickname, and even without the title. Is it because they don't respect her or simply because they feel she shouldn't be addressed that way?

In the TV series "Band of Brothers," a lieutenant gives a captain a "quick salute" and the latter turns and tells the former, "You salute the rank, not the man."

People tend to call a president many names, nicknames or whatever. The appellations can be affectionate or derisive. Not unusual for public figures. That comes with the territory, so it is said.

In any case, if you respect the person, you show your respect. If you don't, it would be good (especially if you're in the military) to show respect for the office. Respect the office and be civil with the office holder.

—NOEL ADRIANO,
adrianoel@yahoo.com

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DENR Quezon head axed over logging

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr., *PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

LUCENA CITY—THE CONTROVERSIAL CHIEF OF the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Quezon has been relieved from his post effective this week following a petition submitted to Malacañang by Church leaders, government officials and residents in the Reina (Real-Infanta-General Nakar) area of the province.

Emrich Borja, head of the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office, will be replaced by Felipe Ortiz, former Palawan Penro and currently assigned at the DENR central office, according to Wilfredo Riña, chief of the DENR-Calabarzon Forest Resources Conservation Division.

Last month, more than 20,000 residents of the Reina area signed a petition asking President Macapagal-Arroyo to stop logging in the Sierra Madre mountain ranges.

They also urged the President to replace Borja; Antonio Principe, DENR executive director for Southern Tagalog; and Antonio Diwa, community environment and natural resources officer in Real. They blamed the three officials for continued logging in the Sierra Madre.

Apparently, only Borja was found culpable after the investigation.

But according to Riña, the petition had nothing to do with Borja's removal. He refused to elaborate.

In February, the provincial board appealed to Ms Arroyo to order a stop to the continued destruction of forests in the Sierra Madre after watching a video footage of illegal logging in the mountain range taken by the Church-based Social Action Center (SAC) and the Task Force Sierra Madre (TFSM).

Borja absolved his office of any responsibility for the resurgence of illegal logging in the Sierra Madre and instead pointed to Manila-based DENR officials as the ones to blame.

The remarks prompted Principe to castigate Borja.

After feeling the heat, Borja took a combative stance and instead accused the SAC and the TFSM of being themselves involved in illegal logging in the area.

Quezon government and Church officials defended the integrity of the two organizations, hailing them as front-liners in the protection of the Sierra Madre.

ROUNDUP

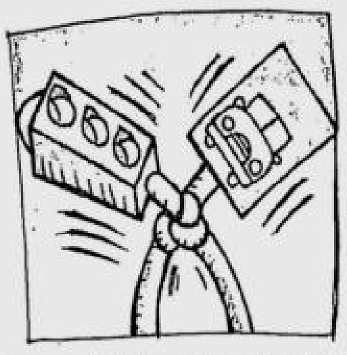
Motorists urged to use alarms

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANTHONY MISTADES

LEGAZPI CITY—The Traffic Management Group (TMG) has urged motorists to install high-tech alarm gadgets to protect their vehicles from car thieves and highway robbers. TMG chief Chief Supt. Errol Pan said during a visit here that while law enforcement agencies were in full gear in their anticar theft drive, the high-tech gadgets could deter car thieves. He asked for the support and cooperation of the community for success in stopping car theft. Pan said a delivery van was recovered in less than three hours by joint operatives from the TMG and the local police after the Kabalikat Civicom Inc., a volunteer community radio group, reported the hijacking incident. The van, which contained P700,000 worth of assorted cigarettes, was seized by armed men in front of the public market in Guinobatan, Albay.

Edgar Alejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Funny ordinance



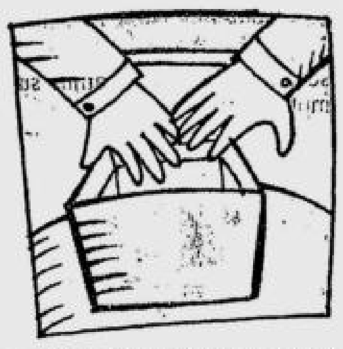
DARAGA, Albay—Municipal Councilor Ellen Magayanes has described as funny an ordinance transforming a traffic congested area in Barangay Kimantong here into a common Filcab terminal. Magayanes, who was on official travel when the ordinance, sponsored by Councilor Jesus Llabore, was approved, expressed doubt that the legislation was railroaded. She added that instead of easing traffic in the town, the legislation made it worse. Kimantong residents, led by barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan officials, petitioned for the removal of the terminal, claiming that it was in a busy loading and unloading junction between two vulcanizing shops and a gasoline station.

Edgar Alejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Medical mission

OFFICERS and members of the APO ni Huwakin Inc., in coordination with the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) and A-1 Vision Center, will conduct a medical mission which includes free dental checkup, eye consultation and medicines on May 23 from 8 a.m. to noon at Barangay San Joaquin, Sto. Tomas, Batangas, according to a press release.

Poll lottery postponed



COTABATO CITY—The Commission on Elections has postponed the scheduled drawing of lots to determine the new mayor of Kabuntalan, Maguindanao. This, after the poll body, in an en banc resolution, directed lawyer Lilian Radam, the Comelec municipal chair, to hold in abeyance the May 14 special hearing of Kabuntalan's special board of canvassers at the Maguindanao provincial capitol during which mayoral aspirants Mike Fermin and Alimudin Macacua will draw lots. Both Macacua and Fermin got 2,208 votes following a special election held on May 6 in Barangay Guiwa. Radam said under the election code, drawing of lots was the alternative in a tie. Macacua asked the Comelec to investigate the May 6 special elections and determine why the board stopped the casting of votes at about 2:15 p.m. or 45 minutes before voting closed at 3 p.m.

Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Napocor to transfer power barge to Iloilo

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—THE NATIONAL Power Corp. (Napocor) will transfer a 32-megawatt power barge from Cebu to Iloilo to prevent a power shortage in Iloilo City.

Eduardo Eroy, Napocor vice president for thermal generation and Visayas head, said Napocor Power Barge 101 would be moved by the end of next month or early July.

The barge is currently being cleaned off Mactan Island in Cebu until the first week of June. It will be towed to Subic for dry-docking.

Eroy said the barge would be sent to Iloilo to address growing concern of a possible power shortage in the city, the center of Western Visayas.

He said the barge was no longer needed in Cebu after the completion of the Cebu-Mactan transmission line.

Under an agreement signed on May 5, Napocor will supply power to Panay Electric Co. (Peco), sole distributor of power to the city's 180 barangays.

Peco is now being supplied by the Mirant-owned Panay Power Corp. (PPC), while the rest of Panay gets power from Napocor.

Last year, PPC had repeatedly warned of outages, saying it could not continue supplying Peco because of the latter's debts amounting to P250 million.

Iloilo Mayor Jerry Treñas earlier warned of outages starting this month when PPC was expected to have a shortfall of about 3 mW.

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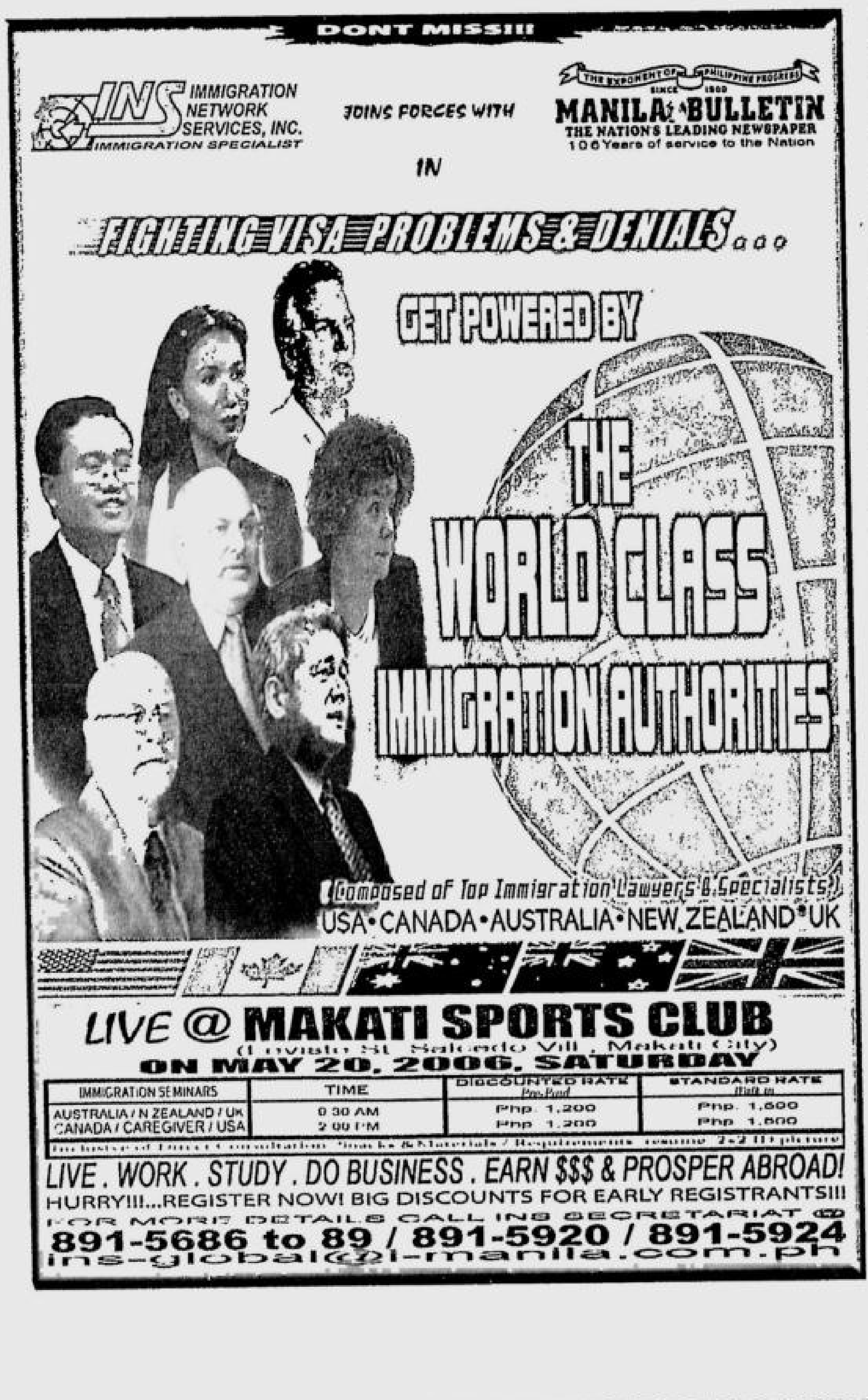

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Realty firm offers to remodel Burnham Park

BAGUIO CITY—FIL ESTATE Corp., which operates Camp John Hay, has offered to remodel and upgrade the near century-old Burnham Park, on behalf of its unnamed partners.

The offer is the first development initiative from a private group to be heard by the National Parks Development Committee, which oversees Burnham and all other national parks in the country, according to a Department of Tourism official, who is privy to the transactions.

The 34-hectare Burnham was built in 1909, according to designs prepared by American architect Daniel Burnham.

Burnham, whose Chicago work is considered one of the world's most influential architectural feats, also designed Baguio for the colonial American government, based on the urban layout of Washington, the government capital of the United States.

Burnham Park draws most of the tourists arriving at the summer capital each year, particularly because of its manmade lake.

But the city government can only sustain its yearly P17-million upkeep, said park administrator Gerry Wayan. Many other parts of the park have gone to rot and needed immediate rehabilitation, he said.

Fil Estate board director Noel Cariño began preliminary talks on the project with the city government last year. He offered Mayor Braulio Yaranon early this year to beautify, renovate and develop the park "subject to certain terms."

But the offer is being taken with a grain of salt because Fil Estate's John Hay firm owes the government up to P1.2 billion in overdue rent.

Fil Estate runs the consortium that owns Camp John Hay Development Corp. (CJHDevco), the developer of the former American rest and recreation base.

CJHDevco is immersed in talks with the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) to preempt several legal complaints surrounding its 25-year lease.

The developer owes the government rent going back to the 1990s, but it now considers the state liable when CJHDevco also lost its tax benefits in a Supreme Court ruling due to technicalities.

The Fil Estate offer also raised some questions when Cariño was identified as the firm's president in an official letter sent to Yaranon on March 20.

Lawyer Ferdinand Santos is Fil Estate president. Robert John Sobrepeña, who has stakes in the John Hay project, is Fil Estate chair.

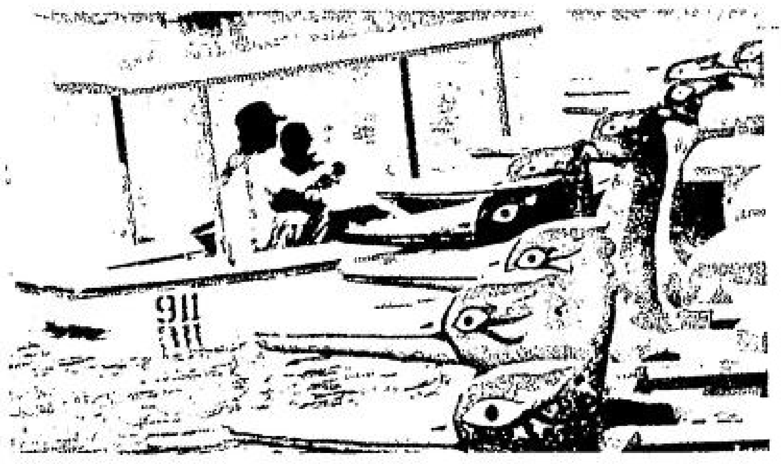
Cariño is proposing to raise two commercial buildings and a two-story pay parking structure, which Fil Estate and its partners will operate, after he conducts a three-month feasibility study of the park.

The firm will foot all the bills for renovating the rest of the park.

In exchange, Cariño said in his letter to Yaranon that the developers would remit 15 percent of its net profits to the city government.

Guided by former Assistant Secretary Joseph Alabanza, adviser on urban planning of then President Fidel Ramos, city architect Josephine Chan is drawing up a new park master plan that preserves Burnham's original design while incorporating modern facilities, such as an underground parking level near the football grounds.

The preliminary designs frown upon the construction of buildings inside the park. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*



BURNHAM Lake now has boats rented out for P60 for an unlimited time. Previously, the charge was P60 an hour. The dwindling number of tourists forced commerce in Burnham Park in Baguio City to make adjustments. PDI PHOTO

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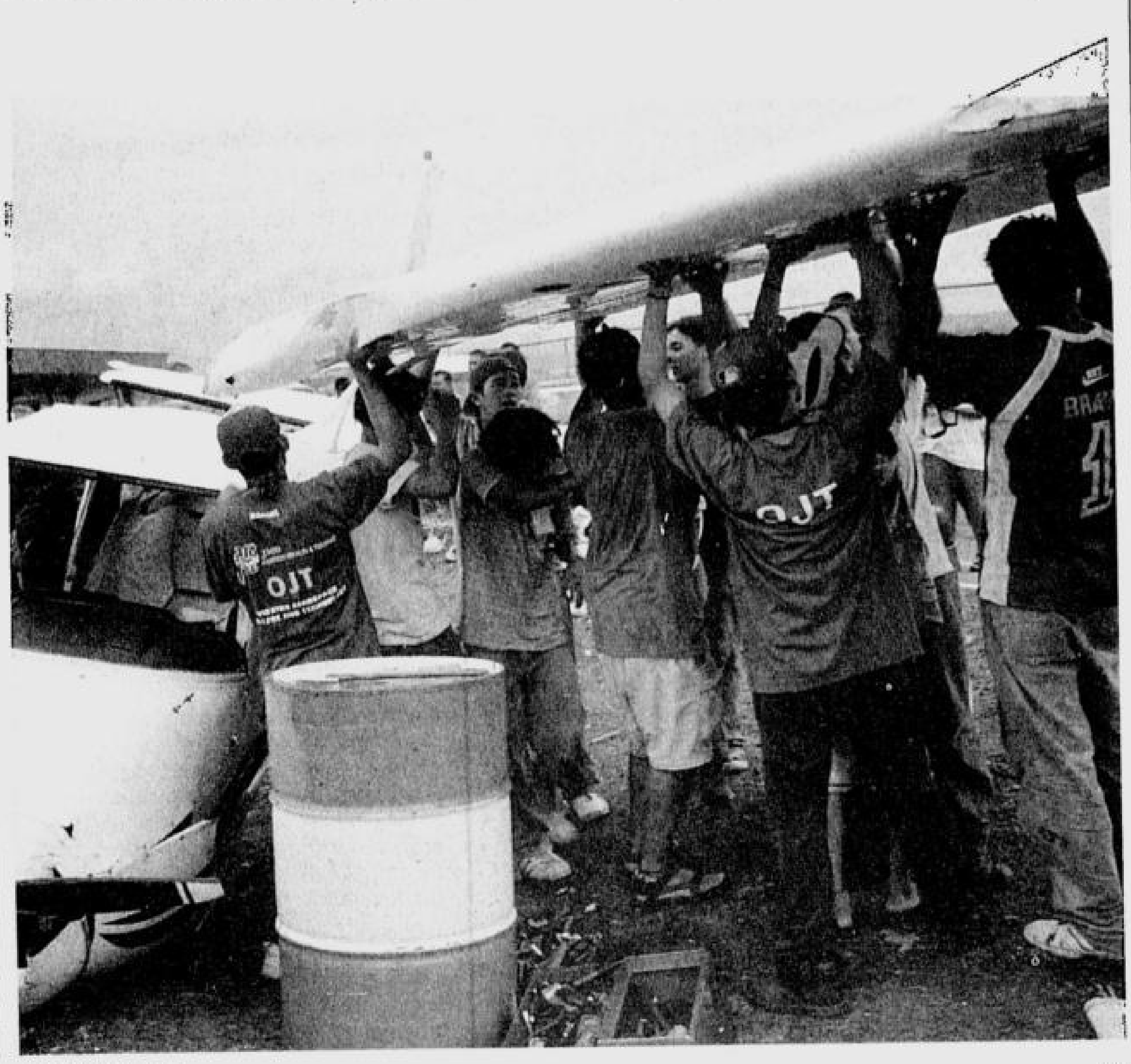
Pay-for-grade scam in Baguio uncovered



GROUNDED

AFP

Flying school ground personnel clear a damaged single-propeller Cessna 150 trainer plane, after it crashed outside the Cebu airport while landing. The plane carried an unidentified female South Korean flight student and a Filipino instructor, who both suffered slight injuries in Saturday's accident.

BAGUIO CITY—A UNIVERSITY student helped the National Bureau of Investigation entrap an English instructor she accused of running a pay-for-grade scam in a city college.

But the student is now being sued by her classmates for allegedly being the accomplice of Cleto Chachapna Jr., 28, an instructor of the Baguio Central University.

The student is among the complainants against Chachapna, but four other students claimed she collected P100,900 from them to facilitate their graduation from the BCU nursing school.

The four are asking City Prosecutor Benedicto Carantes to now absolve Chachapna six days after his arrest.

They claimed the student was the one who approached them last year and told them how to fix their grades.

"We gave the money to the student in sheer despair because we are already graduating students, and we are so anxious to graduate in pursuit of our dreams for better lives," they said in their affidavits.

The NBI-Baguio arrested Chachapna on May 3 when he supposedly accepted marked money from the students in a local restaurant.

Chachapna is supposedly behind the scam, in which the students said they could pay P3,000 "in exchange of a passing grade in any major nursing subject," and P1,000 "for a passing grade in any minor subject."

But the four said they were surprised about the teacher's involvement.

Chachapna claimed he was framed by the student, according to his lawyer.

"[Chachapna] admits discussing the plot with the student, but he said he never participated in the deed. He said it was the student who executed the plot [to extort money from the students in exchange for good grades]. If the deed was merely contemplated and not acted upon, it is not a crime," the lawyer said.

The INQUIRER learned that Chachapna's lawyer was also the counsel of the four complainants, who implicated the student in the scam this week.

"It was… the student who convinced us that there is hope [for us because we can still] obtain passing grades, and that she will be able to convince our teachers to give us passing grades," the students said.

"She also told us to tell anybody else who is interested in passing their subjects [about her offer]. Thus by word of mouth, it has been spread among our classmates, if not in the whole school that she possesses the power and influence to obtain a passing grade in any of the subjects a student is enrolled in," they said.

They claimed that they paid the student twice, the first time in December 2005, and the second this year "because she said her contacts were not satisfied with the money that we gave her."

They said that when they tried but failed to get their transcripts, they sought out the student and demanded the return of their money.

"We were then all surprised to learn that on May 3, a certain Cleto Chachapna Jr. was arrested for obtaining money from the student in exchange of passing grades. We never had any transaction with Cleto Chachapna Jr. as we made all our transactions with the student."

"It is for this reason that we would like to request the authorities to dismiss our complaint against Cleto Chachapna Jr.," they said.

Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

RISING COSTS

PNOC drops bid to build new geothermal plant

VALENCIA, NEGROS Oriental—The state-owned Philippine National Oil Co.-Energy Development Corp. (PNOC-EDC) has dropped plans of borrowing money to build another 20-megawatt geothermal plant in Barangay Nasuji, this town following the failure of a second bidding.

Paul Aquino, PNOC-EDC president, told reporters on Thursday that the bids submitted by suppliers were way above their allocated amounts because prices had gone up considerably since the time the budget was prepared.

Aquino said the cost of producing one megawatt of electricity used to be only P1 million. Now, he said, it costs about P50 million.

No borrowing

"The government will no longer borrow money and spend it (for the power plant)," Aquino said. Instead, the PNOC-EDC has invited private companies to put up a plant and market the 20 mW of steam for 25 years.

"If a private party is willing to do that, the government has no business going into it," Aquino said.

He said several companies had already submitted letters of intent to build the power plant.

He said that the 20 mW from the future Nasuji plant was already included in the Philippine Energy Plan, which aimed to boost the 40-45 mW expected production of he Northern Negros Geothermal Project in Bago City by February next year.

The Palinpinon plant of the PNOC-EDC supplies steam to the National Power Corp., which gives nearly 200 mW of electricity to consumers on the islands of Negros, Panay and Cebu. *Alex V. Pal, PDI Visayas*

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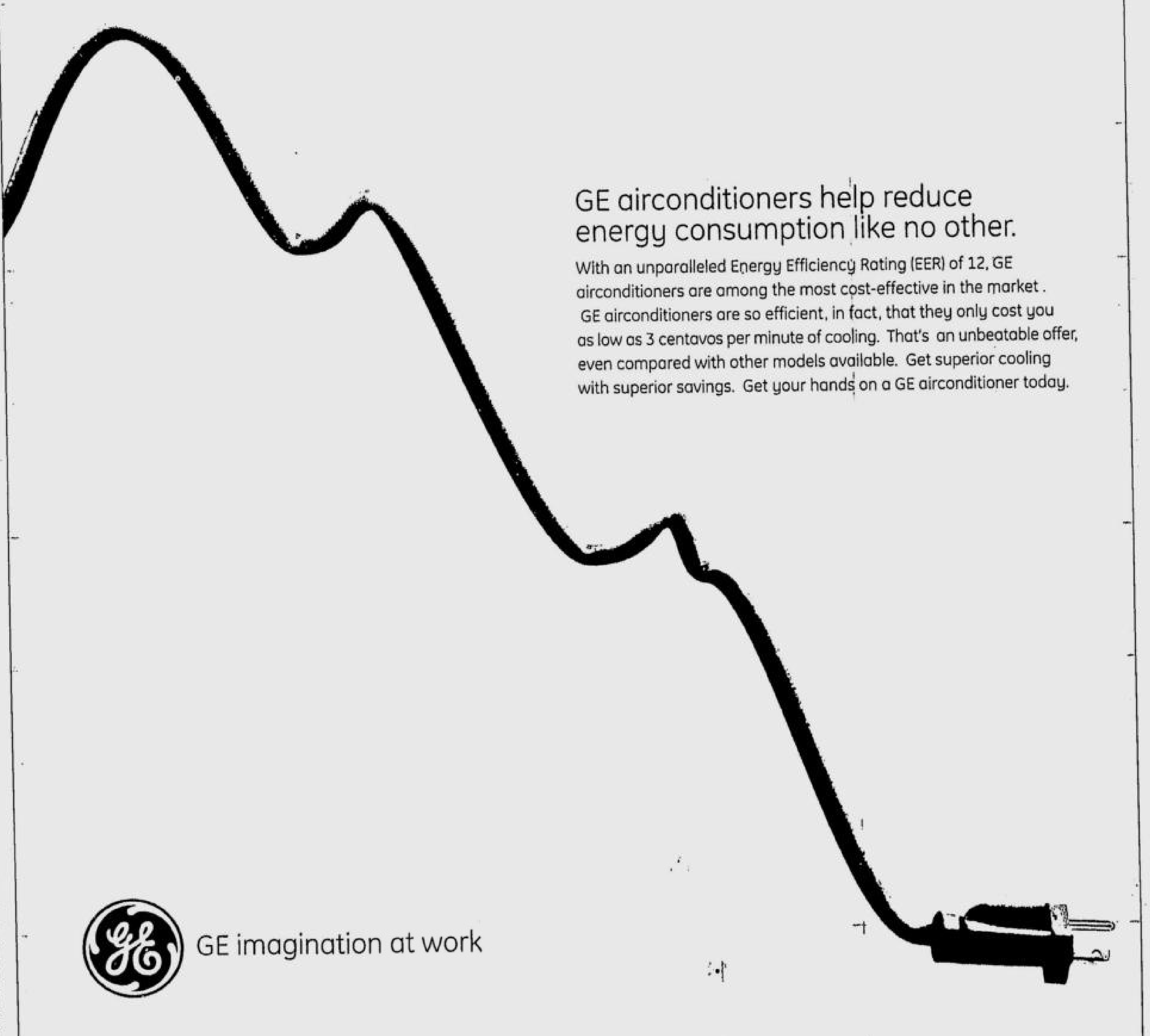

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Con-ass bid could mean Senate days numbered

From page A1

tors had become a stumbling block to Charter change, and that "I don't want to forfeit my duty to help write a new Constitution" in a constituent assembly if the court were to rule in favor of Congress "voting as one."

Twisting the knife in the flesh, Santiago said she would go even as far as abolishing the Senate to make way for a unicameral legislature.

Leaving aside the legal issues to lawyers to debate, this article underlines that what is significant in Santiago's shift is that it marks a defection from the ranks of the Senate, already breaking from the statements by Senators Edgardo Angara and Manuel "Lito" Lapid that they would participate in a constituent assembly.

Shifts in allegiance

Whether or not one agrees with Santiago, no one can stay neutral over her or ignore her. No one, for example, can overlook the volatile shifts in her political allegiance, including her current dalliance with President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Whether or not the issue of the constituent assembly could be resolved by the Supreme Court during the third congressional session remains to be seen, but an acceleration of events is putting pressure on the Senate to demonstrate its relevance.

These events are no longer idle speculation. They have empirical basis. They raise questions about whether the Senate's days are numbered, or whether it is being marginalized.

They do not depend for answers on whether or not Santiago's apocalyptic prediction of the Senate's demise and her time frame of its extinction come true.

First, there is relentless pressure from the House and the administration to fast-track the process of constitutional change within the next 12 months, through either the people's initiative mode, which seems to have hit a dead end, or the constituent assembly mode.

Speaker Jose de Venecia is not sparing any effort to install an "interim parliament" by July 2007. Santiago has come on board the constituent assembly express train and some senators are reported to be wavering, waiting for the outcome of a challenge in the Supreme Court.

Unfinished business

Second, the Senate agenda for the next months is crammed with unfinished business, several of which concern investigations which were suspended in September last year, when the President banned executive department officials from testifying at Senate inquiries without her permission.

These include the Garcillano tapes case and the NorthRail project, through which Senate President Franklin Drilon and Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile are trying to pin down the administration for alleged corruption.

Now that the Supreme Court has decided to uphold the right of the Senate to compel executive officials to testify "in aid of legislation," the Senate reopens today inquiries into these two pending cases.

The Senate is under pressure to put a closure to these inquiries within the next 12 months before it is overtaken by the developments on the Cha-cha express track. It has already come under scathing fire from Ms Arroyo's House allies.

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles is not alone in saying the senators' "obsession to oust President Arroyo has so blinded their primary task of legislate" that they are now the "National Fault Finding Investigators of the Republic." Not a few citizens share this view.

There is doubt whether the Senate can put a closure to its inquiries within the year. The Senate, as well the House, is not one of the most popular public institutions of the Republic.

Sordid record

The Senate's record of putting closure to its cases is pretty sordid. It blew its last big chance to rise above this history in January 2001, when, acting as a tribunal in the impeachment trial of then President Joseph Estrada, it suppressed evidence on his bank transactions. The suppression triggered People Power II.

The more important issue of closure facing the Senate is its own demise if it is overtaken by the momentum of events generated by the Cha-cha movement. Its time frame is narrow. By mid-2007, the Senate cannot evade the issue that history might be coming full circle.

The Philippine legislature started as a unicameral Philippine Assembly in 1907. The Senate was created by the Jones Law of 1916, at the behest of Manuel L. Quezon, who initiated it as a rival power center in his struggle for dominance in Philippine politics with Speaker Sergio Osmeña.

Back to unicameral?

This legacy left by Quezon has defined the Senate's behavior as the spoiler to the presidency in the years to come. Historical development of Congress is going back to its unicameral origin, putting the House on the crest of the current tide for the parliamentary system.

The historian Joseph Ralph Hayden has succinctly observed that "Philippine parties ... were instruments of liberty rather than of government."

The Senate's accent on investigations epitomizes this assessment. The important question staring the Senate is: Will it be missed by the people, except for the soap opera on its floor?

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, May 15, 2006
5th Week of Easter
Isidore, the Farmer
(Labrador)

1st Reading: Acts 14:15-18
Gospel: John 14:21-26

Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever keeps my commandments is the one who loves me. If he loves me, he will also be loved by my Father; I too shall love him and show myself clearly to him."

Judas—not the Iscariot—asked Jesus, "Lord, how can it be that you will show yourself clearly to us and not to the world?" Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word and my Father will love him; and we will come to him and make a room in his home. But if anyone does not love me, he will not keep my words, and these words that you hear are not mine but the Father's who sent me.

"I told you all this while I was still with you. From now on the Helper, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of all that I have told you."

Commentary

Paul and Barnabas preach in Iconium and they are stoned. They flee but continue to preach wherever they go. In Lystra they once again heal a cripple, drawing him to his feet, an image of standing for belief, of resurrection. And they seek to introduce the people who are in awe of them to the hidden mystery of God among them. Jesus patiently teaches his disciples that he will be with them when they are true to his Word, and that the Father will love them and they (the Trinity) will make their dwelling place with them/us. It is the power of the Spirit of God that will do these things.

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2 chambers of Congress seen to clash on priorities

From page A1

As in previous years, a third of the budget was allocated for debt service payments at P340 billion.

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles said he expected the remaining days to be more productive for the lower chamber. He said that it did not have to deal with as many committee inquiries as the Senate.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's political adviser, Gabriel Claudio, yesterday also expressed concern the remaining sessions would be taken up by "politically motivated inquiries" in the Senate.

Claudio said the Palace will convene the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council tomorrow to "maximize the use" of the remaining session days.

Government paralysis

"Expect the start of total war between Congress and the executive branch," said Golez. He said the "truth-seeking Congress" will "clash with the stonewalling executive determined to cover up the truth."

"Malacañang will continue to invoke Executive Order No. 464 even if it was already struck down by the Supreme Court," he said, referring to the gag order on government officials summoned to appear at congressional hearings.

"Because of Malacañang's all-out shameless campaign to hide the truth, and with the Senate, as well as the House minority pressing for the truth, the government will be paralyzed and the people will be sacrificed on the altar of lies and cover-up," said Golez.

Investigations of the "Hello Garci" election fraud scandal allegedly involving Ms Arroyo and four generals and the P700-million fertilizer scam have remained unresolved because of the EO 464 clampdown.

Charter change advocates in the House led by Rep. Mauricio G. Domogan lauded administration Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago for predicting last week that the Senate would cease to exist in two months as the move to adopt the parliamentary system gained ground.

Speaker Jose de Venecia and Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye were optimistic yesterday that Santiago's colleagues would follow her lead and support the House position that Congress should vote as one in forming itself into a constituent assembly.

A majority of the senators have expressed preference for a constitutional convention to revise the Charter, which De Venecia viewed as costly and time-consuming, and could further exacerbate the raging political crisis.

"I predict that Miriam's dream of the Senate killed by July will remain just a dream. I hope her dream doesn't happen because I see only one way it could happen—by brute force and fraud," Golez added.

Senate caucus

The senators are holding a caucus today to discuss the upcoming work load.

In view of the Senate's budget hearings that started in mid-November last year, the senators should have "less plenary discussions" on the measure in the coming weeks, Arroyo said.

Sen. Ralph Recto had said he and his colleagues would pass the budget, but it would be lower than the current proposal. Sen. Manuel Villar Jr. echoed this, saying it would be ridiculous to approve it in July when the 2007 budget would be presented.

At today's Senate caucus, the agenda would focus on the budget and other key legislation, such as the proposed election automation, national policy for tourism and biofuel program, Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said.

2 options

Senator Arroyo outlined two options for the Senate on the budget. He said it could "substantially" adopt the House-approved version, which copied en toto Malacañang's original proposal, except for some minor revisions.

"The Senate did this last year and we had a 2005 budget," he said.

The second option was for the chamber to revise the budget to a "more realistic and justifiable level," consistent with the objectives of the expanded value-added tax and the taxes on alcohol and tobacco, the senator added.

Leadership shake-up

"In that case, a bicameral conference will take place,'" he said. "What will be the outcome is anybody's guess, but the Senate has done its duty."

Quashing speculations on the Senate leadership shake-up, Senate President Franklin Drilon yesterday declared he would keep his deal with Villar and would back him in his bid to succeed to the Senate presidency in July.

"I will stand by that commitment," Drilon said. *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

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YOUR FUTURE IS IN THE SKIES

Skin whiteners . . .

From page A1

But the illegally produced lotion she bought in a store near this village in southeastern Thailand turned her skin into a patchwork of albino pink and dark brown. Doctors say her condition may be irreversible.

"I never look in the mirror anymore," she said, sobbing during an interview.

Whiter skin is being aggressively marketed across Asia. Vast selections of skin-whitening creams on supermarket and pharmacy shelves testify to an industry that has flourished over the past decade.

In the Philippines, Hong Kong, Malaysia, South Korea and Taiwan, four of every 10 women use whitening creams, according to a survey by Synovate, a market research company.

The skin-whitening craze is not just for the face. It includes creams that whiten darker patches of skin in armpits and "pink nipple" lotions that bleach away brown pigment.

Dangerous trend

And while many if not most whitening creams are safe, doctors, consumer groups and government officials are reporting dangerous consequences of the trend.

There are women who use blemish creams in large, harmful amounts. And there are also inexpensive black market products with powerful but illegal bleaching agents that are selling briskly, particularly in the poorer parts of Southeast Asia.

"I have a lot of complaints—with photographs—which show that before the cream is used the face is fine and then after it looks like it's been roasted in the oven," said Darshan Singh, the manager for Malaysia's National Consumer Complaints Center, a nonprofit group.

Skin-whitening products work in various ways. Some contain acids that remove old skin to reveal newer, lighter skin underneath.

Other products inhibit melanin, like those with mulberry extract, licorice extract, kojic acid, arbutin and hydroquinone, an ingredient in prescription creams for blemishes as well as in photo processing materials.

Cheap but risky

Some of the most effective agents are also risky—and are often the least expensive, like mercury-based ingredients or hydroquinone, which in Thailand sells for about $20 per kilogram, compared with highly concentrated licorice extract, which sells for about $20,000 per kilogram.

Hydroquinone has been shown to cause leukemia in mice and other animals. The European Union banned it from cosmetics in 2001, but it shows up in bootleg creams in the developing world.

This particular agent is sold in the United States as an over-the-counter drug, but with a concentration of hydroquinone not exceeding 2 percent.

Last year, 62 new skin-whitening products were introduced in supermarkets or pharmacies across the Asia-Pacific region, according to Datamonitor, a market research firm, accelerating a trend that has seen an average of 56 new products introduced annually over the past four years.

Thailand's Food and Drug Administration has published a list of 70 illegal whitening creams. Indonesian officials have identified more than 50 banned cosmetics. *New York Times News Service*

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Tragedy of Cultural Revolution recalled

From page A1

mies," Xu Youyu, a philosophy professor at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, told Agence France-Presse recently.

Mao's main revolutionary tools were students and workers, whom he rallied against party bureaucrats, intellectuals and other figures of authority accused of taking "the capitalist road."

Red Guards

Nine days after Mao's directive, a radical philosophy instructor at Beijing University, Nie Yuanzi, put up a poster criticizing the university's administration for "suppressing the revolutionary masses." It launched what was to become the vanguard of the revolutionary upheaval—the Red Guard movement consisting mainly of students who went on a rampage to terrorize the nation.

The movement spread like wildfire to other universities and high schools across the country, shutting down the entire education system as teachers and intellectuals were beaten or tortured—often to death.

Mao's appeal to the young radicals to "bombard the (CCP) headquarters" in August 1966 unleashed a tidal wave of political persecution and violence. That month came to be known as "Red August" because of all the blood that was spilt.

Bands of Red Guards roamed the country with Mao's blessing, hounding "capitalist roaders" and destroying with fervor any objects deemed symbols of "feudalist oppression," such as cultural, art and religious relics.

Mao's cult

When Mao reviewed one million Red Guards who packed Tiananmen Square for the first of eight times in August 1966, his cult status had reached its zenith.

"The Red Guards were like God's army, they were Chairman Mao's soldiers," Lu Li'an, a former Red Guard who later spent 11 years in jail for criticizing the excesses of the movement, told Agence France Presse.

The ferocity of the movement continued to multiply as rival radical factions fought pitched battles for control in the cities, plunging the country into a state of civil war.

The People's Liberation Army took their allotted task of disbanding all "counterrevolutionary organizations" as carte blanche to smash militant groups opposed to their own organization interests.

In a bid to restore order in December 1968, Mao ordered the Red Guards sent to the countryside to be "reeducated by the impoverished peasants."

The violence petered out, although purges and power struggles continued.

Prominent political figures purged during the Cultural Revolution included Deng Xiaoping, who astonishingly came back to succeed Mao as China's paramount leader, and then President Liu Shaoqi, who died in jail in 1969.

End comes

The end of the Cultural Revolution came just weeks after Mao's death in September 1976 when his immediate successor, Hua Guofeng, with the support of the CCP Politburo, ordered the arrest of the powerful Gang of Four.

In the following years, the Gang of Four—the most prominent member being Mao's wife Jiang Qing—was blamed for leading the Cultural Revolution, but scholars have suggested Mao's endorsement rendered him just as guilty.

The official verdict came in a lengthy "resolution on history" in 1981 from the CCP, which proclaimed the movement was "responsible for the most severe setback and the heaviest losses suffered by the party and the people since the founding of the People's Republic (of China)."

The party said Mao had made "gross mistakes" but also stated his contributions had been far greater, hence preserving his stature as the "great leader" while maintaining the legitimacy of party rule.

Millions are believed to have died due to persecution during the Cultural Revolution, although academics say determining an exact figure is impossible.

Scars of revolution

What is indisputable is that while China is now experiencing its "economic miracle," the scars of the Cultural Revolution remain.

"The Cultural Revolution has caused invisible and irrecoverable internal injuries in people's minds," said philosophy professor Xu, also a former Red Guard.

"Most Chinese students forever lost their innocence, optimism and spirit of service and these were precious resources for China's modernization … this is the Cultural Revolution's real tragedy." *AFP*

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93rd leftist leader killed

From page A1

The men fled on a motorcycle toward the highway, said Sr. Cecille Ruiz, chair of Karapatan in Central Luzon, which conducted a fact-finding mission.

Bloody trail

The slaying followed the abduction of Anakpawis leader Benedicto Magdaong in Angeles City on May 5. Magdaong is still missing.

On May 9, Bayan Muna's chair in Misamis Occidental, Jemias Tinambacan, a Protestant pastor, was also killed by unidentified assailants.

The following day, in Isabela, two more Bayan Muna members were murdered.

Military hand

Roman Polintan, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) chair in Central Luzon, suspected the military was again behind the latest killing.

Malacañang on Friday said President Macapagal-Arroyo had ordered the PNP to "leave no stone unturned" in investigating the killing of militant figures.

House Deputy Minority Leader Satur Ocampo, leader of the Bayan Muna party-list group, denied government claims that the bloody purges ordered by the CPP in the 1980s were continuing to this day.

"It will be a propaganda vehicle for [the government] to blame the Left for the continued killing of activists and exculpate the state security forces that appear circumstantially to be the perpetrators," Ocampo said in a phone interview.

Grand conspiracy

Ocampo said the "grand conspiracy" to pin him down and the other members of the so-called "Batasan 5" militant lawmakers for the unsolved murders could be gleaned from Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez's claim that the rebellion cases recently filed against the congressmen could open a "Pandora's box" of revelations on the communist purges.

Bayan Muna's De Castro warned that thousands of leftist activists and sympathizers would join Bayan Muna to finally oust Ms Arroyo.

"We're sure that all fallen activists—including the 93 Bayan Muna martyrs—will get justice because we'll see to it that GMA will be ousted before the end of her term," De Castro vowed.

Bogus probe

De Castro said Ms Arroyo's investigation order was "just for media consumption."

De Castro asked the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, other churches and the Commission on Human Rights "to help unravel the brains and perpetrators behind the serial political killings."

De Castro said that based on his group's experience, the police only conducted routinary investigations.

"They have no intention to go deeper," he said, adding that the police knew that the military intelligence group was behind the killing of activists.

De Castro also said the purge theory of the government—accusing the militants of killing each other—was a big insult to them, to the families of the victims and the victims themselves.

'Baseless accusation'

Parrying the militants' allegations, Justice Secretary Gonzalez claimed the rebellion cases against the "Batasan 5" would reveal the role of the communists in the killing of militant activists.

"The case will even solve the mystery behind the present killings," he said.

National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales, for his part, said there were indications that the Communist Party "has been killing members of the NPA and other militant groups in a bid to cleanse its ranks of infiltrators."

He expressed confidence that he would be able to gather information that could help the authorities solve some of the slayings, which he believed were part of a CPP purge of its ranks.

This "only shows the ruthlessness of communist leaders and their total disregard to human life," he said.

Lt. Col. Ricardo Visaya, commander of the Army's 69th Infantry Battalion based in Mexico, Pampanga, said the military had no hand in the killing of Nardo or in the abduction of Magdaong.

"That's a baseless accusation," Visaya told the INQUIRER.

The battalion does not maintain a detachment in the area where the killing occurred or in Angeles, he said.

Visaya alleged the series of killings of militant leaders was the work of the CPP, the New People's Army and the National Democratic Front.

Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr., commander of the Army's 7th Infantry Division in Central Luzon, did not take the INQUIRER's calls on Sunday, but he earlier denied having organized, trained or maintained a so-called "Black Army" to kill political activists.

With reports from Michael Lim Ubac and Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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Young pianist impresses Licad . . .

From page A1

val, Bianca played an inspired Schubert Impromptu No. 4 in A Flat Minor.

Licad and the audience were impressed.

This was not the first encounter between the world-acclaimed pianist and the young talent. They had met four years earlier in Tuguegarao City in Cagayan.

In 2002, Bianca and her businessman-father Esmond travelled seven hours from Piddig to Tuguegarao to watch a Licad concert.

"After the concert, Bianca and I could hardly say a word. We were so moved by Licad's performance," Esmond said.

"Her hands were so quick and they made such beautiful sounds," Bianca recalled.

Father and daughter had planned to head back to Ilocos Norte after breakfast in their hotel. By chance, they saw Licad and her concert organizer, Pablo Tariman, eating in the same restaurant.

Seizing the moment, the two approached Licad to have some piano pieces autographed.

"That was when she learned that I was a piano student," Bianca said, recalling that Licad asked her to spread her fingers to check for length and flexibility.

Ungodly hour to play

Sensing the young girl's earnestness, Licad asked Bianca to play for her. But since there was no piano at the hotel, they walked to a nearby bar which had an upright piano. Tariman, who knew the owner, asked that the bar be opened at the ungodly hour of 9 a.m.

There, Licad chatted with Bianca and listened to her play for an hour.

"I played several simple pieces including Saint-Saëns' 'The Swan' ... and Beethoven's 'Fur Elise.' She noticed an error in the tempo," Bianca said, noting that the tempo she adopted was based on her piano lessons.

Licad then asked Bianca to play her own version of the piece and to ignore what she had learned from her piano teacher.

Correct version

"She said my version was correct," Bianca said.

Licad was impressed and told Bianca to work hard and for Esmond to take his daughter to a good music school.

"I had to convince myself that this was happening. Perhaps, Licad was just being nice to us because we came all the way from Piddig. But I followed her advice and took Bianca to a good music school," Esmond said.

Tariman, in fact, recommended Nita Quinto of the University of the Philippines' College of Music in Diliman, Quezon City. Bianca has been under Quinto's guidance since.

Later, someone suggested that Esmond take Bianca to see former first lady Imelda Marcos, who was so impressed by Bianca's performance she asked how she could help the young pianist.

When told that Bianca wanted to study at the Philippine High School for the Arts in Mt. Makiling in Los Baños, Laguna, Marcos wrote a letter endorsing Bianca for a scholarship.

Nevertheless, the young pianist went through the usual auditions to earn a slot at the PHSA where she is now a sophomore. She spends five days attending classes at the PHSA and the rest of the week at the UP College of Music for piano lessons.

In Paoay, a few hours before the April 30 concert, Licad asked Bianca to play her Schubert piece.

"It was the first time she heard Bianca perform since that fateful meeting four years ago," Tariman told the INQUIRER.

"She has improved a lot," Tariman said, recounting Licad's comments.

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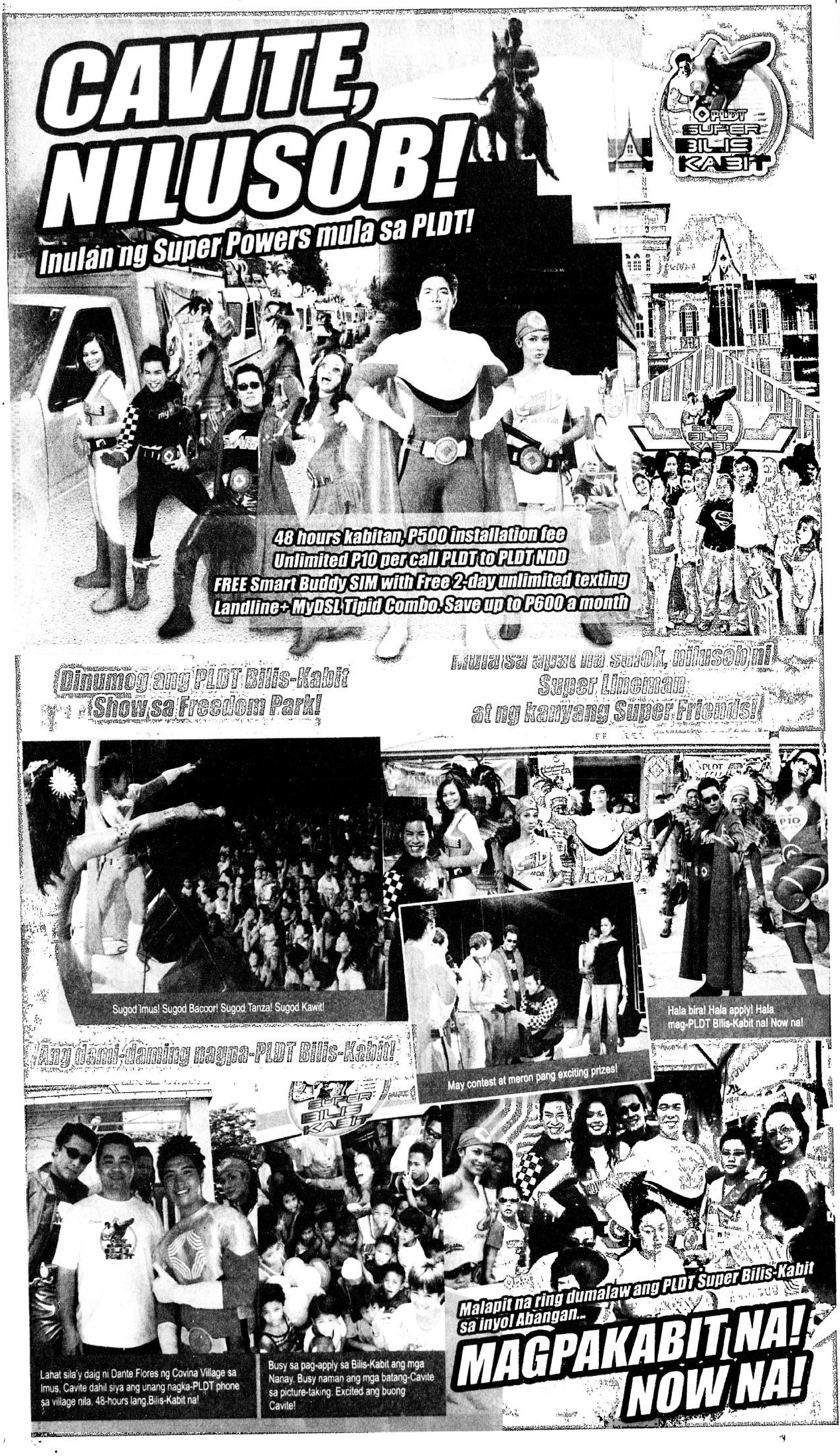

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MOM'S DAY
A mother and her daughter watch over the newest addition to their family, a baby boy. Malls were packed yesterday as Filipinos paid tribute to the single greatest influence in their lives: their Mothers. RAFFY LERMA

Missing coed's body found in Cavite creek

St. Scho freshman would have turned 18 this week

By Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—Two days after she was reported missing, the body of a student of St. Scholastica's College in Manila was found floating in a creek in Bacoor, Cavite, last Friday.

SPO4 Dante Ordono, officer-on-case, identified the victim as Marilet Asentado, a first year Mass Communications student and a resident of Golden City Subdivision in Barangay Salawag, Dasmariñas, Cavite.

Asentado would have turned 18 on Wednesday.

Ordono said officials of Barangay Molino called up the Pag-Asa police detachment at around 8 a.m. Friday to report that they had found the body of a woman in a creek near the Daang Hari road.

Half-naked body

Asentado's body was half-naked, with her pants pulled down to her knees. "The body was bloated almost beyond recognition," Ordono told the INQUIRER over the phone.

He said that aside from the victim's bag which contained an identification card, the police also found a towel at the crime scene which they believe belonged to the suspects.

Ordono said the victim could have been raped before she was killed.

Disbelief

Relatives of Asentado called on the police to conduct a speedy investigation. Florman Asentado, the victim's older brother, said their family still could not believe the tragedy that had befallen his sister.

"All we want now is justice. We call on anybody who could have any information on this case. We call on anybody who could have seen my sister before she was raped and murdered. Please help us," Florman said in a separate interview.

Florman said the last time they saw the victim was when she left their house at around 10 a.m. last Wednesday to attend her summer class in St. Scholastica's.

Rosales seeks Noli's help

MANILA ARCHBISHOP GAUDENCIO CARDINAL Rosales has asked Vice President Noli de Castro to ensure that families displaced by the SouthRail project would be relocated to a site with adequate facilities.

In a letter to De Castro dated May 12, Rosales also requested that he look into the possibility of finding alternative "in-city relocation sites."

"Poor people living along the railroad tracks from Caloocan to Los Baños have come to me several times to ask for my help with their relocation problems," the cardinal said.

Some of these problems, he added, included "children's education, family income, distant relocation and excessive concern for cut-off dates and deadlines" regarding the relocation process.

Rosales said that based on a study conducted by the Urban Poor Associates, the situation at the relocation site in Cabuyao, Laguna, was "seriously poor."

Poor facilities

"Hunger has doubled since people were relocated; the water is not potable without boiling; there is still no light and family incomes have fallen to P5,568 on average a month from a prelocation level of P6,500 to P7,500," the cardinal's letter read.

"Therefore, I am asking you as a representative of the government to first assure housing, water, electric and school facilities before setting a definite date for all evictions along the SouthRail. This will allow the government to complete the unfinished tasks in the Cabuyao relocation site and to look more closely for in-city relocation sites," Rosales told De Castro.

De Castro heads the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council which is in charge of relocating nearly 32,000 families who will be displaced by the SouthRail rehabilitation and modernization project.

The over $50-million government project will cover the Philippine National Railways' 36-kilometer railway from Caloocan City to Alabang. Once completed, it will have the capacity to carry roughly 187,000 passengers a day.

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'Not for private use'

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

GOING ON VACATION? Taking your kids to school? Make sure you are not using a government vehicle.

In a memorandum last week, the Pasig City government reminded its employees never to use government vehicles for private trips.

"The Office of the Ombudsman and the Land Transportation Office are closely monitoring the unauthorized use of government vehicles for appropriate legal action: either suspension or dismissal from the service," the memorandum signed by city administrator Reynaldo Dionisio said.

Copies of the memorandum were distributed to all offices at the City Hall.

"We have to anticipate these things. We have to remind our employees," Dionisio told the INQUIRER.

The prohibition is an old order, being the subject of an administrative order from Malacañang as early as August 2005, apparently in response to many complaints about government employees and officials using government cars to go shopping, to dine at restaurants, fetch their children.

Dionisio said that there was "a need to remind our people because if not, they would think this order is not being implemented seriously."

RECOVERED STOLEN CAR

Chief Supt. Nicasio Radovan Jr., Quezon City Police District director, presents to media the Nissan Patrol of Pangasinan Rep. Amado Espino, which was found abandoned in a remote sugar cane plantation in Porac, Pampanga last Friday. The vehicle was stolen on Tuesday evening in Quezon City. Two suspected car thieves were also arrested.

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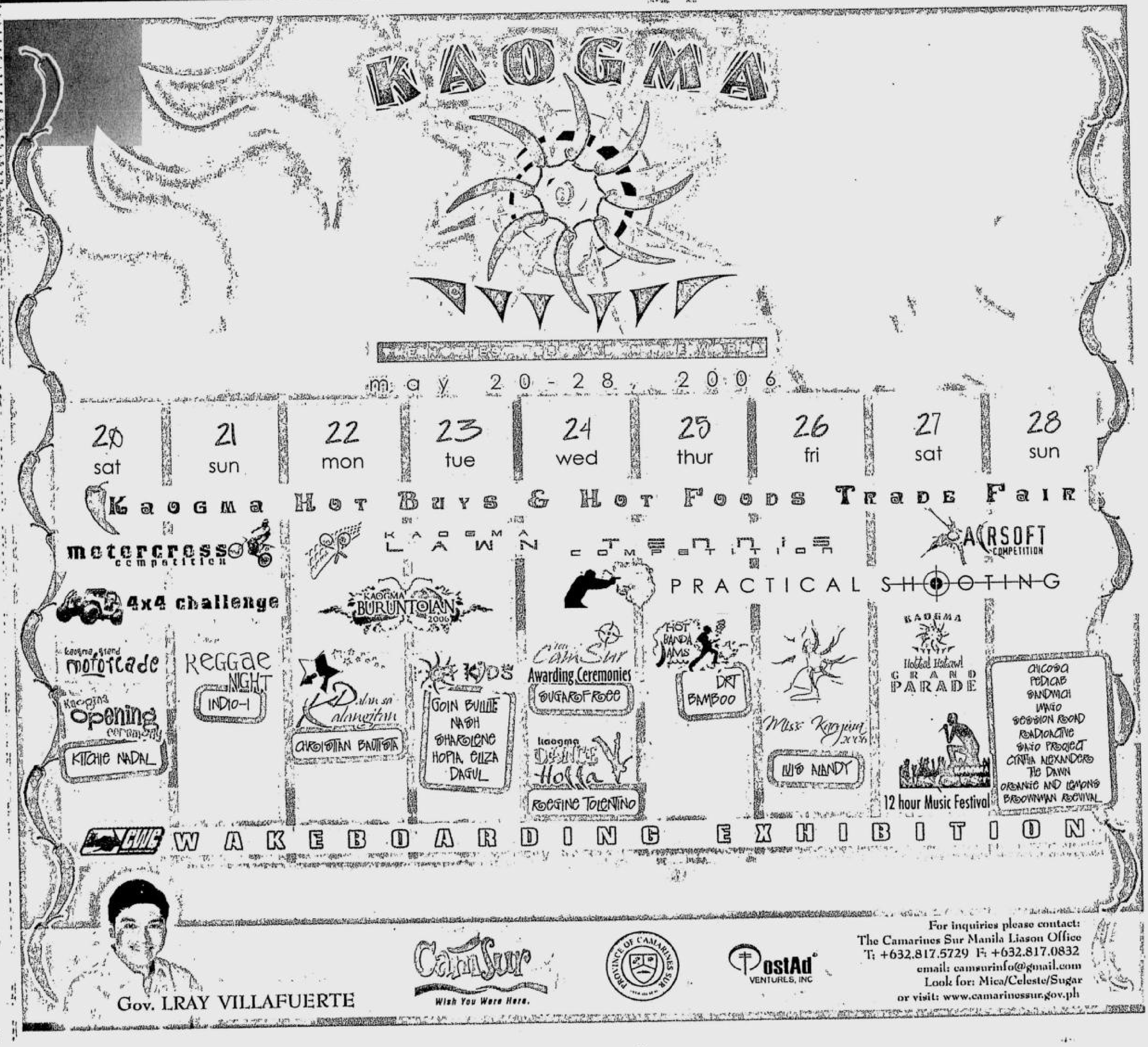
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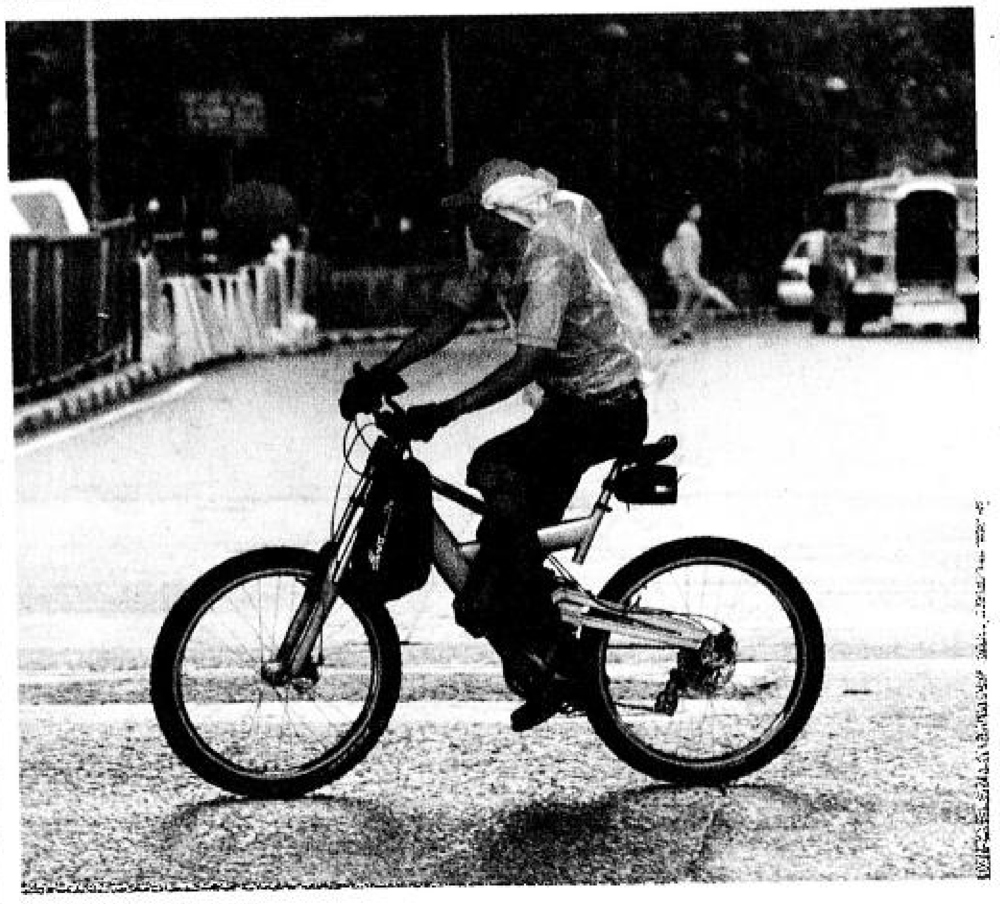

RISKY BUSINESS
A man on a bike braves the rains and strong winds, with only a plastic sheet wrapped around his head for protection. Intermittent rains were felt in most parts of the country yesterday, as "Caloy" continued to move across Luzon. REM ZAMORA

METROBRIEFS

Speed up road work in Manila

IN PREPARATION for the rainy season, the Manila City government has ordered the City Engineer's Office to speed up work on road and drainage projects. "The pace of all redevelopment and maintenance work in Manila must be accelerated before the rainy season sets in. Unfinished construction work, especially on the city's streets and thoroughfares, could definitely cause flooding that aggravate the traffic situation and cause accidents," Mayor Lito Atienza said. He also directed City Engineer Armand Andres to take advantage of the few remaining days of summer to cover street diggings and potholes and clear clogged sewage systems. The city recently bought two trucks to augment its heavy equipment. The case loader/backhoe truck and Isuzu NPR truck equipped with a baker aerial lift cost P6 million and P11 million, respectively.

Erika Sauler

Girl Scouts national convention

NEW CHALLENGES, New opportunities" is the overall theme of the 20th national council convention of the Girl Scouts of the Philippines which will be held on May 25 to 27 at the Century Park Hotel in Malate, Manila. Over 400 Girl Scouts presidents, executives and participants from 95 GSP councils nationwide are expected to attend the three-day national gathering. They will exchange ideas during panel discussions on the following topics: "Building membership and social marketing and branding," "Creative resource generation" and "Functional board committees." Resource persons include Emily Abrera, chairman emeritus of McCann Erickson Philippines; Lolita Garcia, council president of the Bukidnon Girl Scouts Council; and Ma. Consuelo F. Corpuz, council president of the Ilocos Norte Girl Scouts Council. Acting Education Secretary Fe Hidalgo will be the special guest and speaker on May 26.

Pirated software seized in Pasig

By Margaux C. Ortiz

CLOSE TO P20 MILLION WORTH of unauthorized computer programs were seized by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation in simultaneous raids on two design firms in Pasig City last Thursday.

The owners of Beyond Space Group, Inc. and One Zone Asia (Philippines) Inc., both located on Doña Julia Vargas Avenue in Ortigas Center, now face charges of copyright infringement, according to NBI Intellectual Property Rights Division (IPRD) chief Jose Justo Yap.

Yap said Autodesk Inc., manufacturers of the Autocad program, filed a complaint with the NBI regarding the firms' use of unauthorized copies of the software.

NBI operatives were able to obtain a search warrant from Manila Regional Trial Court Judge Antonio Eugenio Jr., authorizing them to conduct raids on Beyond Space Group Inc., located at Unit 2004 Antel Global Corporate Center 3, and One Asia (Philippines) Inc., located at Unit 2401 and 2404 of the same building.

NBI agent Joseph Furing said the operatives were able to seize 46 personal computers containing 76 pieces of unauthorized Autocad software worth P19.9 million.

Furing said that while Beyond Space was involved in mechanical and electrical designs, One Zone Asia focused on engineering designs.

He added that both firms violated Section 177.1 in relation to Section 217 of Republic Act No. 8923 or the Intellectual Property Law. *With Maielle Montayre*

Two men convicted for selling shabu

By DJ Yap

FOR TRYING TO SELL TWO small bags of shabu or methamphetamine hydrochloride, two men will spend a lifetime in jail.

A Quezon City court sentenced Judes Bacinillo and Joselito Lorilla to life imprisonment on Thursday, two years after they were caught in a buy-bust operation in Barangay Culiat.

In an eight-page joint decision, Judge Jaime Salazar of Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 103 also ordered the two men to pay a fine of P800,000 each.

The accused were found guilty of violating Section 5 of Republic Act No. 9165, or drug pushing.

Court records showed that Bacinillo and Lorilla were arrested on July 5, 2004, after they sold two small plastic bags, each containing 3.94 and 4.13 grams of shabu, to a man who turned out to be a policeman.

Arnel Cave of the San Juan police posed as a buyer who wanted to purchase P250,000 worth of the illegal substance. On the day of the transaction, however, he was told that only P17,000 worth of shabu was available.

The accused gave the drugs to Cave in a residential compound in Culiat. They were arrested afterward by an entrapment team which included agents of the Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force.

In court, the two men denied the charges and accused the policemen of kidnapping them separately on the day of their arrest, planting the evidence against them, and then demanding money in exchange for their freedom.

But the court gave greater credence to the policemen's accounts, saying it was hard to believe that they would go to such lengths just to extort money from the accused, who were not rich.

The court also noted that the accused told different stories, which conflicted with each other and that of the police.

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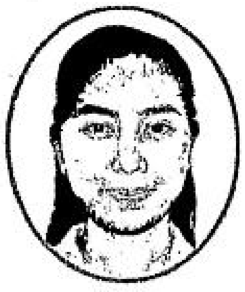

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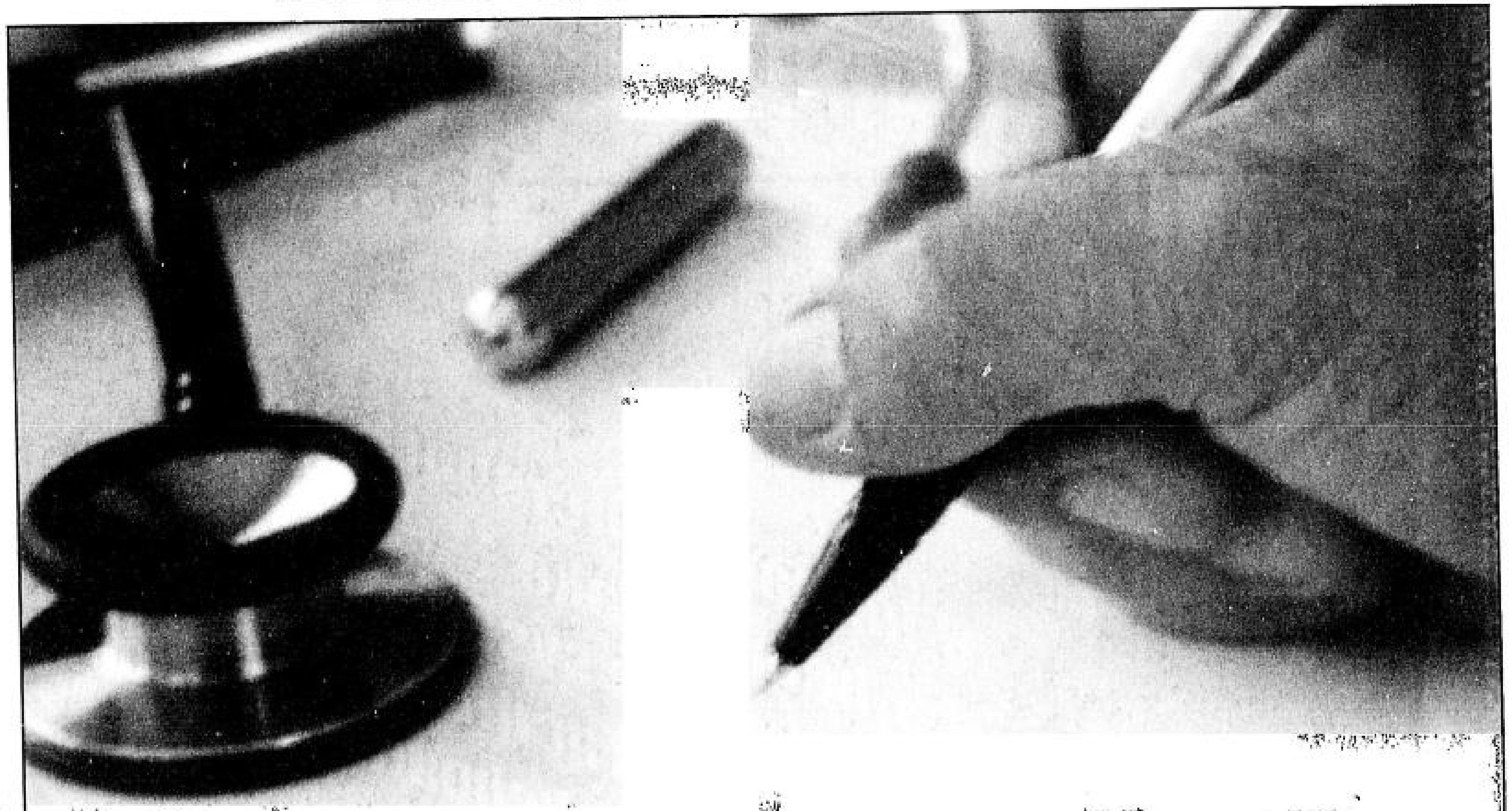

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The entry should be delivered to MEDICard Philippines, Inc. 9/F World Center Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Ave, Makati City 1209 by May 30, 2006, to qualify. The entry should be enclosed in a short brown envelope with the words **"MEDICard Essay Writing Contest/Philippine Daily Inquirer"** prominently written in front.

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The entry should be mailed to MEDICard Philippines, Inc. 9/F World Center Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Ave, Makati City 1209. The entry should have a postmark dated May 25, 2006 or earlier and should reach the MEDICard office by June 3, 2006 to qualify. The words **"MEDICard Essay Writing Contest/Philippine Daily Inquirer"** should be prominently written at the back.

c.E-mail
The entry must be e-mailed to **essays@medicardphils.com** by May 30, 2006 to qualify. The subject must indicate **"Essay Writing Contest-Philippine Daily Inquirer".**

6. Entrants may choose any of the following topics:
   a. Why is healthcare coverage important (or not important) to the average Filipino?
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8. Winners will be announced on the June 9, 2006 issue of Philippine Daily Inquirer.

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4 arrested cops carrying 'tawas'

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE "DRUGS" ALLEGEDLY SEIZED from four Manila Police District policemen who were arrested last week turned out to be a crystalline substance used as a deodorant, the police said.

As a result, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency turned over jurisdiction of the case to the Philippine National Police.

The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, the unit now investigating the incident, also released the four policemen—PO1 Erwin Castro, PO2 Jonathan Ruiz, PO3 Mike Fabian Ongpauco and PO2 Dranreb Cipriano—to their superior.

"They were released with the understanding that they would be presented during investigation," said Supt. Benjamin de los Santos, head of the CIDG-Criminal Investigation and Detection Division.

But the four lawmen, whose car yielded one kilo of "tawas" and not methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu, are not yet off the hook.

Robbery raps

They will be charged with robbery today for pointing their guns at a police asset during the entrapment operation at a parking lot on Hermosa Street corner Jose Abad Santos in Manila.

The CIDG also questioned the four policemen's defense that they were also conducting a legitimate entrapment operation in the area when they were arrested.

The four, members of the Manila Police District's anti-illegal drugs unit, were arrested on Thursday by agents of the CIDG-Anti-Illegal Drugs Operations Task Force.

When a kilo of suspected shabu was found inside their car, the four policemen claimed that they were conducting an entrapment operation.

The way De los Santos put it, the four officers could be charged with "robbery in band" when they brandished their guns to get the cash—actually a combination of marked and boodle money—which the CIDG asset was carrying for the entrapment operation.

Intimidation

Under the law, such an act might have constituted "taking property by force or intimidation," he added.

In a statement issued earlier, Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong, MPD director, had defended his men, and said that they had been wrongfully labeled as suspects.

He added that the four, contrary to the CIDG agents' claims, were conducting a legitimate buy-bust operation "complete with a pre-operation report and coordination sheet with the PDEA."

Irregularities

CIDG director Jesus Versoza, however, said there were some irregularities in the actions of the four MPD policemen.

He pointed that such an operation would require the presence of an official but the four officers were low-ranking policemen. None of them was an official, meaning a cop with the rank of inspector, he added.

Versoza also pointed out that for an antinarcotics operation to be legitimate, there should be authorization from PDEA as well as clearance for the operation.

CLEANUP

A worker at the La Mesa Dam Ecopark tries to clear a pond of water lilies to prevent them from clogging up the body of water.

ALANAH TORRALBA/CONTRIBUTOR

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Pasig gov't probes firm's operations

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

WAS IT ALSO DONE IN OTHER AREAS?

Fearing that sludge could have been dumped in other cities and towns in the metropolis, the Pasig City government is asking the help of other local government units in investigating the alleged violations committed by a company engaged in siphoning waste from septic tanks.

Pasig City Environment and Natural Resources Office chief Raquel Naciongayo said "the company could have also dumped sludge in other areas."

The city government has already closed at least three offices of E. Malabanan Belen Excavator and Plumbing Services for allegedly dumping human waste into a drainage canal in Barangay Bagong Ilog on Tuesday. The drainage empties out into the Marikina River.

Three minutes

Naciongayo said that a service truck of the company, with a closed tank filled with five cubic meters of human waste, could discharge all the sludge in around three minutes.

"The company had already been accosted in Quezon City in July 2004 for dumping wastes. We decided to cancel its business permit then," she added.

According to a business card, the main offices of the Malabanan company are located in Pasig and Mandaluyong cities. But the card also listed contact numbers in Quezon City, Muntinlupa City, as well as some towns and cities in Rizal and Cavite provinces.

The Pasig government said it will also assess the damage done by the company on the city's river system as it believes that the dumping of sludge into drainage systems could have been going on for some time, city administrator Reynaldo Dionisio said.

"Only through this can they be given a lesson. Otherwise they would repeat the same violations," Dionisio added.

The INQUIRER called up the Malabanan company, but employees said their officials were not available for an interview.

Makati vertical marathon set

By Tarra V. Quismundo

A RACE TO THE TOP.

On June 1, the Makati government and the Triathlon Association of the Philippines will once again hold the City Hall Vertical Marathon, a one-of-kind race that was launched last year.

The marathon will begin with a one kilometer run, from the linear park along the Pasig River on JP Rizal Street, to the 22-story Makati City Hall in Barangay Poblacion.

Once they get to the building, runners are expected to climb to the 22nd floor and then race down toward the finish line at the building's front parking lot.

Aside from the individual category, this year's race will introduce the team category, each team composed of five members.

Participants should be aged 18 and above. They will be classified according to age and gender.

Individual racers should pay a registration fee of P200. Senior citizens and students, however, will get a 20-percent discount while teams will be charged P1,500.

The fastest male and female runners will get a gold medal and a cash prize of P10,000. Second place runners will get silver medals and P7,000 each and third placers, a bronze medal and P5,000 each.

The winning teams will get P7,000 in cash and a trophy, second placers, P5,000 and third placers, P3,000.

Those who want to join may call up the Makati City Hall's Information and Community Relations Department at 8998954 or the Philippine Olympic Committee Satellite Office at 5236280.

China installs controversial new Catholic bishop

ZHAN REUTERS

NINGDE, CHINA—CHINA INstalled a controversial new Catholic bishop on Sunday in a ceremony reflecting the split between the Vatican and the Chinese state-run church that divides villagers in this heavily Catholic corner of the country.

Zhan Silu presided over a Mass marking his appointment as bishop of Mindong Diocese in eastern China's Fujian province.

The cathedral in the small city of Ningde was crowded to overflowing with a mix of urban residents and farmers in frayed clothes, welcoming his formal elevation after years as second-string to an infirm bishop who died last year.

But like two other Chinese bishops appointed in past weeks, Zhan lacks the blessing of Pope Benedict, who sharply criticized China for the moves.

Priests in both the state-approved church and the "underground" church around Ningde told Reuters they were upset by Zhan's elevation, warning it may stoke tensions between Beijing and the Vatican, and between the two sides of China's divided church.

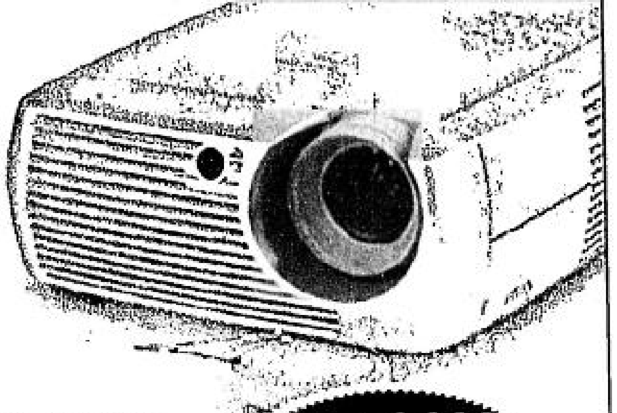
"We've been under heavy pressure to attend," said a local priest in the state-recognized church, who nonetheless believed the Vatican should choose bishops. He asked his name not be used.

China has some 10 million Catholics, but they are split between an "underground" church loyal to the Holy See alone, and a state-approved church, whose members respect the Pope but lack formal ties to the Vatican.

Zhan told Reuters that the underground church had boycotted the Mass, despite his invitation for representatives to attend.

Members of the state-approved church offered mixed views about the dispute between the Vatican and Beijing over who controlled bishops. Some said they did not understand the issue; others said they hoped Zhan would ultimately get papal approval.

Reuters



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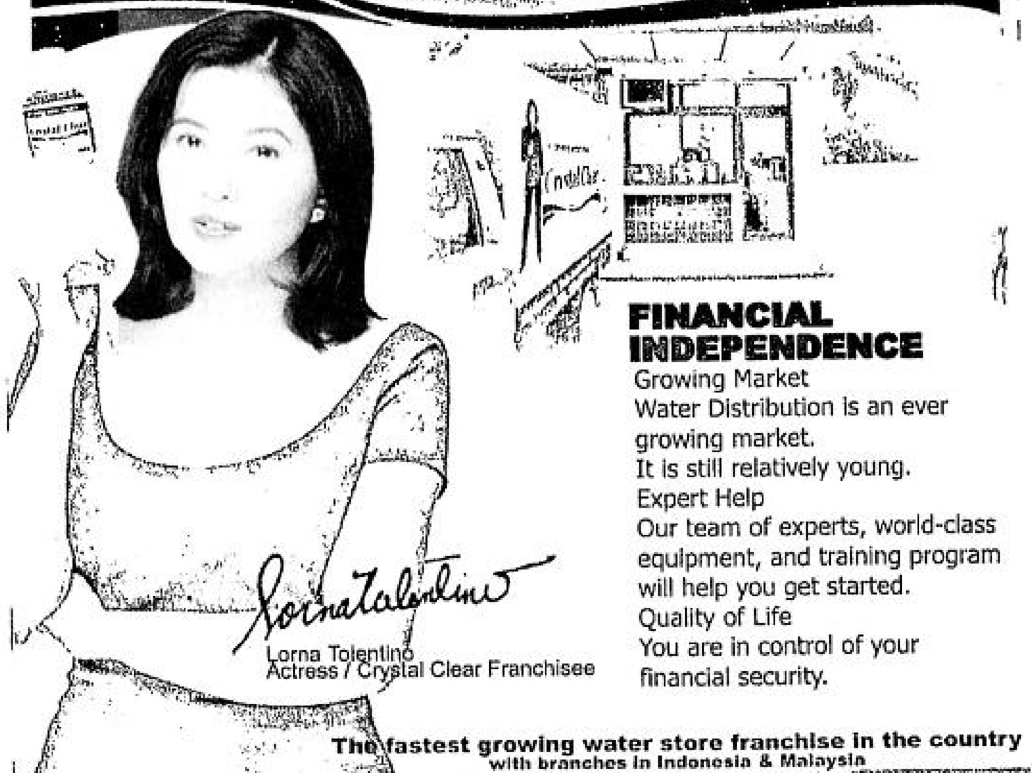

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SWANS swim on a lake at a Shanghai zoo May 8. The Chinese government last week reported an outbreak of bird flu in wild birds in remote western China. AP

Bird flu largely curbed in Asia where it first hit

EVEN AS IT CROPS UP IN THE FAR CORNERS of Europe and Africa, the virulent bird flu that raised fears of a human pandemic has been largely snuffed out in the parts of Southeast Asia where it claimed its first and most numerous victims.

Health officials are pleased. "In Thailand and Vietnam, we've had the most fabulous success stories," said Dr. David Nabarro, chief pandemic flu coordinator for the United Nations.

Vietnam, which has had almost half of the human cases of A(H5N1) flu in the world, has not seen a single case in humans or a single outbreak in poultry this year. Thailand, the second-hardest-hit nation until Indonesia recently passed it, has not had a human case in nearly a year or one in poultry in six months.

Encouraging signs have also come from China, though they are harder to interpret.

These are the second positive signals that officials have seen recently in their struggle to prevent avian flu from igniting a human pandemic. Confounding expectations, birds making the spring migration north from Africa have not carried the virus into Europe.

Nabarro and other officials warn that it would be highly premature to declare any sort of victory. The virus has moved rapidly across continents and is still rampaging in Burma (Myanmar), Indonesia and other countries nearby. It could still hitchhike back in the illegal trade in chicks, fighting cocks or tropical pets, or in migrating birds.

But this sudden success in the former epicenter of the epidemic is proof that aggressive measures like killing infected chickens, inoculating healthy ones, protecting domestic flocks and educating farmers can work, even in very poor countries.

Nabarro said he was "cautious in interpreting these shifts in patterns" because too little is known about how the disease spreads.

Vietnam began vaccinating all its chickens last summer, but Thailand did not, because it has a large poultry export industry, and other nations would have banned its birds indefinitely. (Vaccines can mask the virus instead of killing it.)

Instead, Thailand culled wide areas around infected flocks, compensated farmers generously and deputized a volunteer in every village to report sick chickens.

According to Dr. Klaus Stoehr, a flu specialist at the World Health Organization, Thailand and Vietnam also delivered the antiviral drug Tamiflu to even the smallest regional hospitals and told doctors to treat all flu patients even before laboratory diagnoses could be made. *NYT*

WORLDBRIEFS

30 dead as Brazil gang assaults cops

SAO PAULO, Brazil—A wave of attacks on police by a notorious gang has killed at least 30 people—including 23 officers—in the bloodiest assault of its kind in the history of Brazil's largest state, authorities said. Related uprisings at 18 prisons across Sao Paulo state continued late Saturday, the night after scores of armed assaults on police stations, patrol cars and bars frequented by off-duty officers. The attacks starting Friday night were the work of the First Capital Command, known by the Portuguese initials PCC, said Enio Lucciola, press spokesperson for the Sao Paulo State Public Safety Department. The attacks apparently came in response to several imprisoned PCC leaders being transferred and placed in solitary confinement, a practice authorities use to sever prisoners' ties to gang members outside prison. Eight PCC leaders were among 765 inmates being transferred since Wednesday to a remote high security prison in the interior of the state, Folha de Sao Paulo's website reported. The transfer sought to isolate those leaders from PCC gangs outside prison, authorities said. *AP*

Pope attacks gay marriage anew

POPE Benedict XVI at the Vatican May 10. REUTERS

VATICAN CITY—Pope Benedict renewed his attack on gay marriage on Saturday, saying Christians must defend traditional heterosexual marriage as a "pillar of humanity" benefiting both believers and non-believers. Calling on the faithful to stand up for traditional notions of marriage and procreation in the face of moves to recognize gay marriage, he said: "Such a witness can only stimulate politicians and legislators to safeguard the rights of the family. "It's well known that legal solutions like so-called 'civil unions' are gaining ever greater acceptance, even if, while they exclude the responsibilities of marriage, they claim the same rights," he said in a speech to the Pontifical Council for the Family. "Sometimes, there is the wish even to change the definition of marriage to legalize homosexual unions, granting them the right to adopt children." The comments are stronger than remarks Benedict made two days ago which were criticized by some members of Italy's incoming center-left government as unwanted interference in a political issue. *Reuters*

Thousands flee Indonesia volcano

MOUNT MERAPI, Indonesia—Thousands fled the slopes of Indonesia's Mount Merapi on Sunday as the volcano spewed volcanic ash and belched deadly heat clouds. Officials relocated almost 7,000 people from villages near the boiling crater into dozens of temporary shelters after Merapi sent two massive heat clouds swirling 2 km down its northwestern slopes. The 2,914-meter Merapi has been spewing hot volcanic ash and has shot thick white smoke hundreds of meters into the air from its crater. Merapi's most deadly eruption occurred in 1930, when 1,369 people were killed. Indonesia sits on the Pacific "Ring of Fire" noted for its volcanic and seismic activity. The country has more than 100 active volcanoes—the highest concentration in the world. *AFP*

Nigeria police begin probe of pipeline blast

LAGOS—Nigerian police chief Sunday Ehindero said Saturday that a probe "in all its ramifications" has commenced into a fuel pipeline explosion near Lagos which killed up to 200 people a day earlier. Earlier Saturday, President Olusegun Obasanjo ordered a "thorough" police investigation of circumstances that led to the Friday blast at Ilado beach village near Nigeria's economic capital, Lagos. "Full investigation has commenced. I am investigating the whole episode. I want to find out to what extent my men have known the vandals, what is to be done, what has been left undone. It is a probe in all its ramifications," Ehindero said. *AFP*

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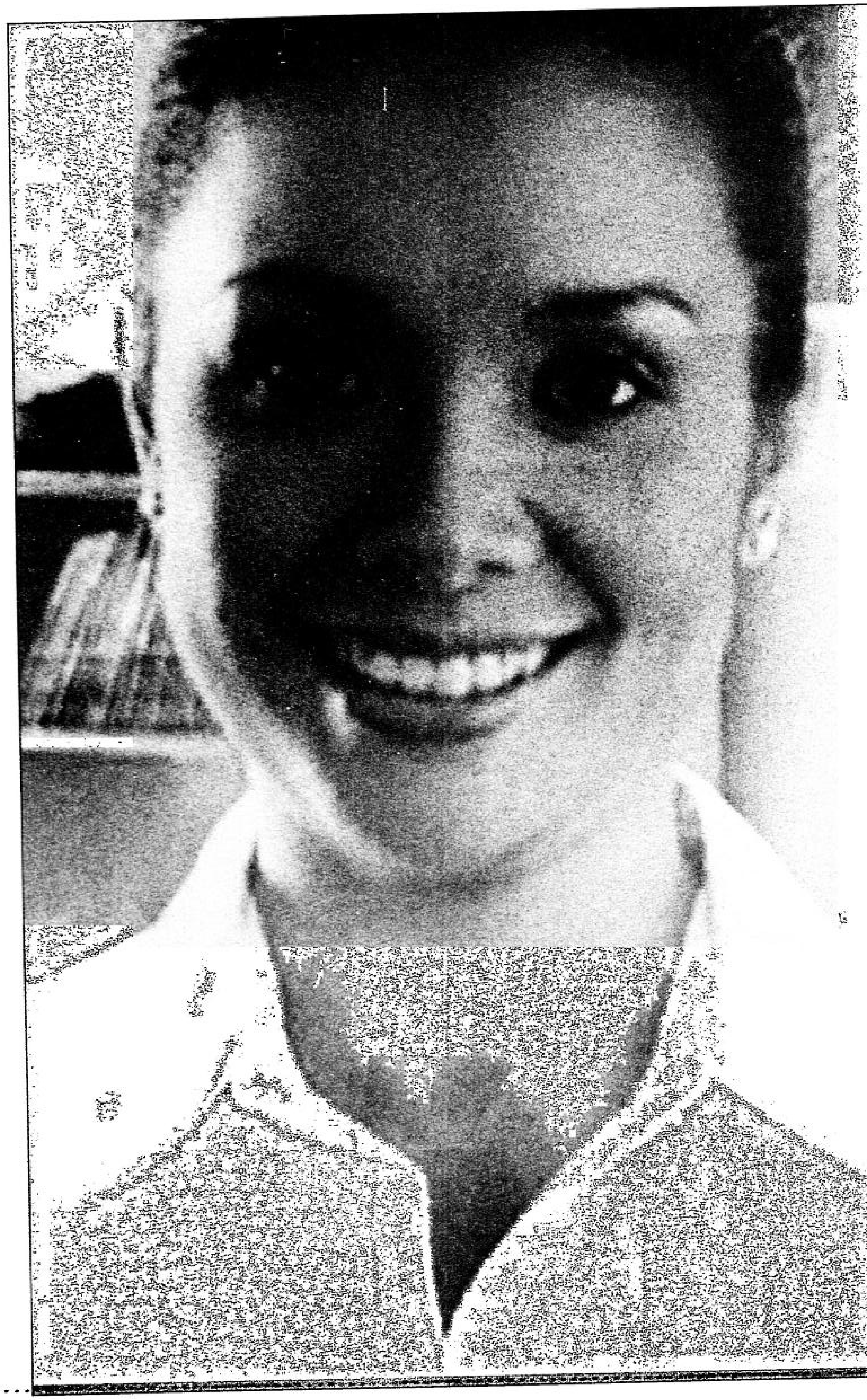

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Help get your public school ready for the new school year!

WHAT CAN WE DO FOR OUR SCHOOL?

- Paint roofs (add 2 or more years to the life of the roof)
- Cement existing footpaths and drains
- Repair comfort rooms and toilets
- Paint exterior walls of classrooms
- Repair or replace ceiling boards
- Repair, refinish or repaint chairs, desks, furniture
- Clean up the gardens
- Repair or replace broken windows, jalousies, doors
- Replace school signs
- Any other types of repairs to be done

WHO CAN HELP?

- Parents
- Local business
- Local School Board
- Local community

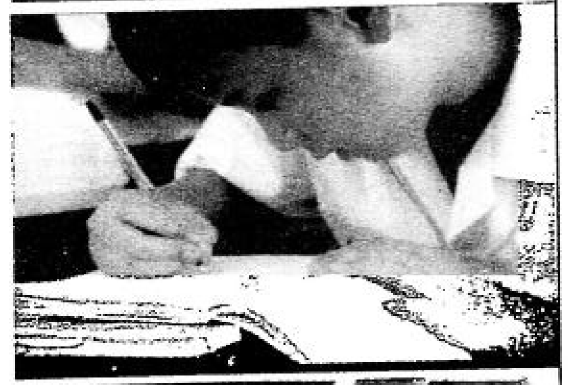
WHAT RESOURCES DO WE NEED?

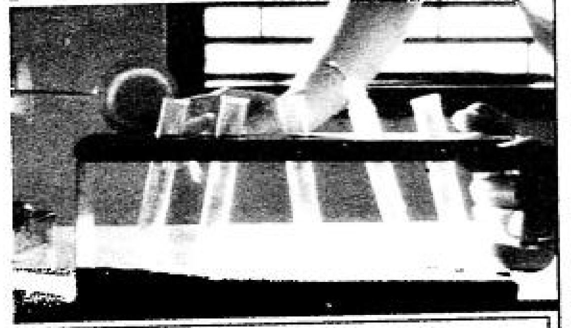
- Some donated materials (paint, cement, lumber, tiles and other building materials)
- A lot of volunteer time
- A whole lot of community spirit
- NO CASH!

HOW TO ORGANIZE THE EFFORT?

Principals and school heads are the key.

1. In February, organize through the PTCA. Look at the areas within the school that the local community can repair. Make a list of what needs to be done and what materials would be needed.
2. In March, recruit parent volunteers through PTCA. Are there parents who are carpenters, plumbers, masons, architects, engineers among the school parents who could volunteer time to organize specific work teams?
3. Approach local business for donations in kind:
    - Hardware stores (paint, cement, wood, nails, etc.)
    - Local restaurants (for food for work groups)
    - Local truckers (to haul materials)
    - Local business (for other materials)
4. Talk to local civic organizations and present the school maintenance plan to be done during Brigada
    - Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, Zonta and other clubs
    - Local industry associations
    - Local church groups
    - Local media
    - Approach the local school board or LGU for additional resources to help augment the voluntary effort
5. In April, the Principal and the PTCA should organize the work groups
    - Appoint teams and team leaders
    - Agree on specific tasks per team per day
    - Organize the logistics.
        - i. Where will donations-in-kind be stored?
        - ii. When can donations be delivered?
        - iii. Who will accept and safeguard donations?
        - iv. Who will ensure that work teams use donated materials properly?
6. During the National School Maintenance Week:
    - Document the effort: take photographs before and after
    - On the last day, celebrate the community bayanihan effort
7. In October, the Department of Education will recognize the most innovative BRIGADA ESKWELA at the Educators' Congress
    - Per region, per division
    - Per large schools and per small schools





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DepED
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CIA nominee designed spying on US public

WASHINGTON—IN THE WEEKS AFTER THE Sept. 11 attacks, Vice President Dick Cheney and his top legal adviser argued that the National Security Agency should intercept purely domestic telephone calls and e-mail messages without warrants in the hunt for terrorists, according to two senior intelligence officials.

But NSA lawyers, trained in the agency's strict rules against domestic spying and reluctant to approve any warrantless eavesdropping, insisted that it should be limited to communications into and out of the country, said the officials, who were granted anonymity to discuss the debate inside the Bush administration late in 2001.

The NSA's position ultimately prevailed. Details have not emerged publicly of how the director of the agency at the time, Gen. Michael V. Hayden, designed the program, persuaded wary NSA officers to accept it and sold the White House on its limits.

Whatever the internal deliberations, Hayden was the program's overseer and has become its chief salesman. He is certain to face questions about his role when he appears at a Senate hearing this week on his nomination as director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Criticism of the surveillance program flared again this week with the disclosure that NSA had collected the phone records of millions of Americans to track terror suspects.

By several accounts, Hayden, a 61-year-old Air Force officer who left the agency in April last year to become principal deputy director of national intelligence, was the man in the middle as President Bush demanded that intelligence agencies act urgently to stop future attacks.

On one side was a strong-willed vice president and his longtime legal adviser, David S. Addington, who believed that the Constitution permitted spy agencies to take sweeping measures to defend the country. Later, Cheney would personally arrange tightly controlled briefings on the program for select members of Congress.

Cheney's spokesperson, Lee Anne McBride, declined to discuss the deliberations about the classified program. Spokespeople for the NSA and for Hayden declined to comment. *NYT*

HAYDEN REUTERS

Bush moves to quell firestorm over phone trolling

WASHINGTON—US PRESIDENT GEORGE W. Bush on Saturday moved to quell a firestorm over his government's secret collection of the telephone records of tens of millions of citizens, insisting they were needed to "target al-Qaida."

But the latest controversy has already spawned a major lawsuit against Verizon, one of the telephone companies involved, and members of Congress expressed unease over what they see as gradual erosion of privacy rights.

The lawsuit, filed in New York on Friday, seeks $5 billion in damages from Verizon, alleging that the company broke the law by agreeing to provide the National Security Agency with its clients' telephone records.

The plaintiffs argue that phone companies should not cooperate with the NSA, which specializes in electronic espionage, without a proper court warrant based on a well-founded "suspicion of terrorist activity or other criminal activity."

But in his weekly radio address, Bush rushed to assure the public the secret program did not target innocent citizens.

"It is important for Americans to understand that our activities strictly target al-Qaida and its known affiliates," he said.

But he gave no answer to questions raised on Capitol Hill as to why a program with a purported narrow target would need such a massive database.

The existence of the program was first disclosed Thursday by USA Today, which said the database compiled by the NSA following the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks contained phone records of tens of millions of Americans provided by AT and T, Verizon and BellSouth.

Officials would not provide any details on how the records were used. But former government security experts and media reports indicated that its genesis lay in US phone numbers found on al-Qaida suspects captured overseas.

These numbers, the experts said, immediately became the focus of the NSA's attention, with the circle of surveillance growing exponentially as calls were made to or from the numbers in question.

Specially designed computer programs watch for patterns in these contacts and analyze them to make sure no terrorist cell is operating within the United States.

Bush said the intelligence activities he had authorized were "lawful" and that members of Congress from both parties had been adequately briefed. *AFP*

Cheney notes referred to Plume, says prosecutor

WASHINGTON—THE US PROSECUTOR IN the CIA leak case has told a court he plans to use as evidence a newspaper article with notes that he says were hand-written by Vice President Dick Cheney referring to Valerie Plame shortly before she was exposed as a CIA operative.

The notes show Cheney and his former chief of staff, Lewis "Scooter" Libby, were "acutely focused" on the July 6, 2003, article written by Plame's husband, Bush administration critic and former US ambassador Joseph Wilson, said Special Counsel Patrick Fitzgerald in the pre-trial filing made on Friday.

A Cheney spokesperson said the matter is a court proceeding and referred a request for comment to Fitzgerald's office.

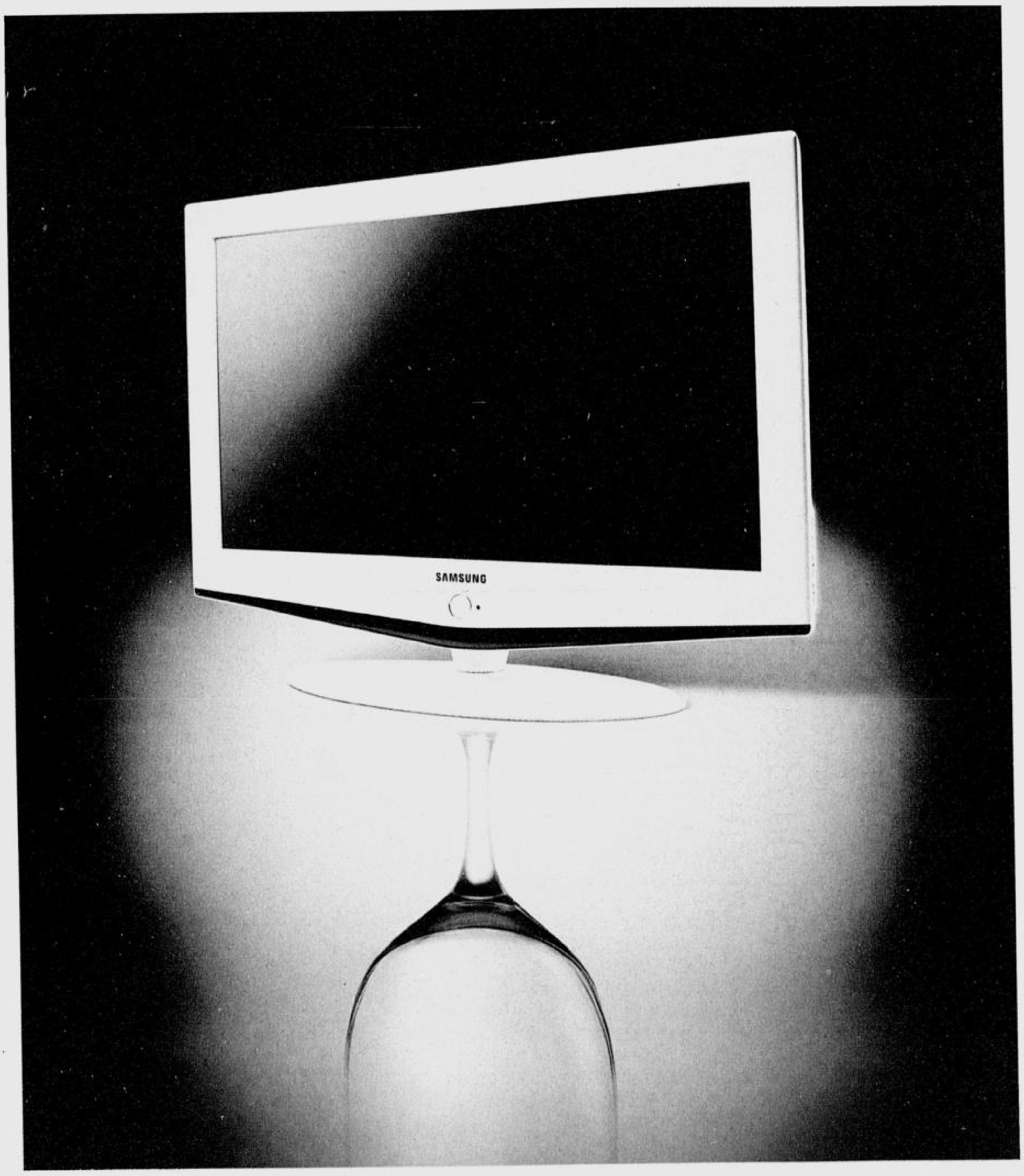
Fitzgerald said the notes show that Cheney and Libby were focused on Wilson and "on the assertions made in his article, and on responding to those assertions."

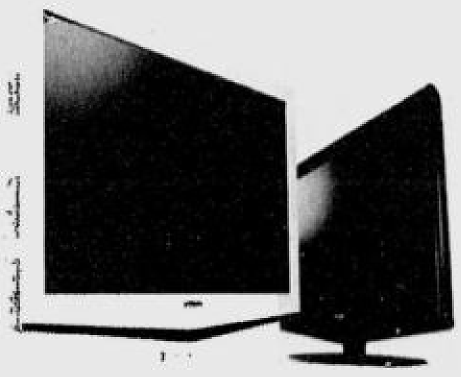
The article asked whether the administration manipulated intelligence in the run-up to the March 2003 invasion of Iraq.

In the article, Fitzgerald wrote he went to Niger in 2002 at the CIA's request to check out reports that the African nation had sold uranium yellowcake to Iraq in the late 1990s.

The processed ore can be used to make a nuclear weapon.

Wilson said he concluded on his tip that it was unlikely such a transaction ever took place. Later, the alleged African uranium connection was cited by the war's backers as evidence that Iraq had developed or had tried to develop weapons of mass destruction. *Reuters*





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Aces settle down to nip Realtors

Red Bull derails Purefoods' semis bid; Tejada severely hurt in freak accident

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE ALASKA ACES GOT TOO COMFORTABLE quite early.

GAMES WEDNESDAY
(*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:40 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs Ginebra
7:35 p.m.—Purefoods vs Talk 'N Text

After nearly blowing a huge 20-point lead in the final quarter, the Aces settled down to roll back the Sta. Lucia Realtors, 98-91, yesterday in the Gran Matador Brandy-PBA Philippine Cup at the Ynares Center in Antipolo City.

"Luckily, we survived the game," said Alaska coach Tim Cone. "We had an opportunity to put the game away (early), but credit to Sta. Lucia, they just wouldn't quit."

Nic Belasco paced the Aces with 20 points, 12 of them in the first quarter, but it was Mike Cortez and newly acquired Willie Miller who secured Alaska's seventh win in 14 games.

Marlou Aquino spearheaded the Realtors' 19-4 charge that trimmed the Aces' 79-59 lead early in the fourth quarter to five, 83-78. The lead was down to 91-88 with two minutes left when Miller and Cortez came to Alaska's rescue with key baskets.

Aquino finished with a game-high 25 points, his highest output in 14 months.

In the second game, Red Bull thwarted Purefoods' bid for an outright semifinal berth with a 92-75 blowout victory.

The game was stopped for 40 minutes after the Giants' Eugene Tejada fell hard on his back with 5:43 minutes left in the fourth quarter after a rebound scuffle. The Purefoods forward, who complained of losing sensation in the lower half of his body, was later brought to the Makati Medical Center.

Lordy Tugade drilled in 31 points to lead the Bulls to their fifth straight victory. Purefoods fell to 10-4.

San Miguel Beer already claimed the first automatic semifinal slot after edging Coca-Cola, 95-92, last Saturday.

"Keeping our composure in the final stretch, that's something we have to work on," said Cone after the Aces stayed on track for an outright quarterfinal slot.

Sta. Lucia registered an all-time franchise low of seven turnovers, but also finished with a season-low of 34 rebounds.

The loss kept the Realtors deeper in the cellar with a 3-11 slate.

The scores:

First Game

ALASKA 98—Belasco 20, Cariaso 15, Thoss 14, Miller 12, Cortez 11, Hugnatan 10, Laure 6, Dela Cruz 6, Ferriols 4, Wilson 0.

STA. LUCIA 91—Aquino 25, Gonzales 17, Espino 12, Cabagnot 9, Mendoza 8, Calimag 6, Omolon 6, Catli 3, Torion 2, Tolomia 2, Santos 1.

Quarters: 31-16, 46-33, 77-57, 98-91

Second Game

RED BULL 92—Tugade 31, Valenzuela 15, Robinson 11, Fonacier 7, Baguio 6, Villanueva 6, Cruz 5, Pennisi 4, Najorda 3, Bugia 2, Alvarez 2, Hrabak 0.

PUREFOODS 75—Pingris 17, J. Yap 13, Simon 13, Evangelista 9, R. Yap 7, Artadi 6, Yee 4, Tejada 2, Gamboa 2, Raymundo 2.

Quarters: 25-15, 45-25, 68-46, 92-75

Burlington

BatangPBA

Basketball League - Season 3

AIR21 skipper Frederick Feliciano replenishes his water supply with help from team coach and Tour veteran Cesar Lobramonte along the national highway in Agoo, La Union. BOY CABRIDO

Barnachea wrests lead; Feliciano rules 'killer' stage

By Musong R. Castillo

BAGUIO CITY—SANTY BARNACHEA WORKED so hard for it, yet talked about the yellow jersey like it was the proverbial hot potato.

The tall, experienced rider from Pangasinan attacked for the third straight day, finishing a fighting second to Erick Feliciano in the "killer stage" from San Fernando City in La Union to here to wrest the overall lead in the Tour Pilipinas Tanduay Padyak Pinoy 2006.

Barnachea, the Sunbolt skipper, offered no promises after taking a 27-second lead over Ericson Obosa, who was third for the day, with a total time of 12 hours, 25 minutes and 24 seconds after three stages.

Feliciano, the Air21 captain, exhibited his skills in the mountains—both in climbing and descending it—in the 163-kilometer grind that took the 80 cyclists through smooth and rough roads and a drastic weather change.

The 28-year-old member of the National Mountain Bike team started out cold under the scorching heat in La Union, caught up with the breakaway group, which Barnachea towed, in the dizzying, dangerous downhill phase of the lap along Marcos Highway.

Once he caught up with Barnachea, Feliciano knew that he had the edge and churned out his career fifth lap victory by clocking 5 hours, 19 minutes and 36 seconds.

Feliciano, a native of Allaga, Nueva Ecija, was overpowering in the second climb back to this chilly summer capital via Kennon Road and broke away from Barnachea with a kilometer left for the solo finish at Burnham Park where a throng toasted the new mountain hero.

Barnachea, who arrived alone, 41 seconds behind Feliciano, finished in the podium in each of the first three stages and will wear the yellow jersey for the second time in his career.

"*Pipilitin kong depensahan yung* yellow jersey (I will try my best to defend the yellow jersey)," said Barnachea.

"*Pero kapag nahirapan ako, ibibigay ko rin* (But if it gives me a hard time, I'm going to give it up)."

Last year, he had the overall lead for a day—in the opening stage—before eventual champion Warren Davadilla snatched it for good.

With two more excruciating climbing stages in the final five laps, Barnachea said the one he fears most is Feliciano, who ate a lot of time from the overall lead to be in third just 56 seconds behind.

"*Ang kinatatakutan ko lang naman ay si* Feliciano, *mahirap kalaban sa akyatan iyan* (The man I fear most is Feliciano. He's a tough man to beat in climbs)," Barnachea said.

"*Wala pa naman akong plano masyado sa* yellow jersey, *pag-uusapan pa namin ng mga* teammates *ko* (I don't have much plans for the yellow jersey, because I need to talk to my teammates first)."

The Lucena to Sta. Rosa, Laguna stage, serving as the sixth lap on Wednesday, is still in the itinerary. There, the riders will have to conquer the dreaded "Tatlong Eme" in Pagbilao, Quezon.

The final test would come the following day, in the Tagaytay-to-Tagaytay stage where a 9-kilo-

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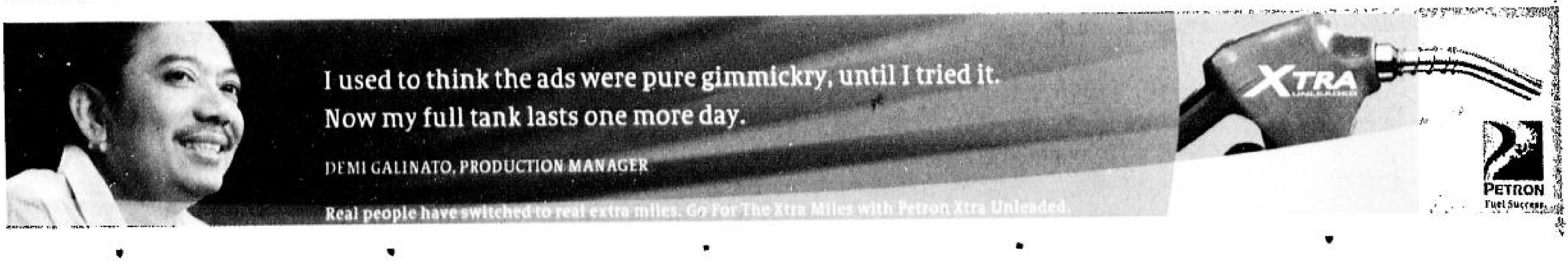
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Tortillos sink Harbour crew; Wizards prevail

THE GRANNY GOOSE TORTILLOS GOT back at the Harbour Centre Postmasters, 85-78, yesterday and boosted their quarterfinal bid in the 2006 PBL Unity Cup at the Olivarez Sports Center in Parañaque.

The Tortillos rallied from 12 points down behind bull-strong JR Quiñahan and Kevin dela Peña and clinched a seventh win in 13 games that kept them on course for one of two twice-to-beat incentives in the next round.

At 5-7, Harbour's Centre must prevail over giant-killer TeleTech tomorrow to keep its flickering hopes alive.

Magnolia Ice Cream finally posted its first back-to-back wins since winning the Heroes Cup last February by turning back Hapee-PCU, 64-62, in the second game to level its record to 6-6.

Kelly Williams shone for the Spinners with three crucial free throws in the final 60 seconds that doomed the Teethmasters, who bowed out of quarterfinal contention with a 3-10 mark.

Inspired by the presence of his family who came all the way from Cebu, the beefy 6-foot-5 Quiñahan scored 11 of his team-high 18 points in the final quarter.

Dela Peña was equally efficient, scoring all his six points in the fourth, including a booming triple that highlighted a 12-0 run and lifted the Tortillos ahead for good, 76-70, with still two minutes left.

The scores:

First Game

GRANNY GOOSE 85— Quiñahan 18, Ibañez 14, Cruz 10, Concha 10, Dela Peña 6, Alfad 5, Grijaldo 5, Santos 5, Saldue 5, Ferrer 3, David 2, Latonio 2, Ababon 0.

HARBOUR CENTRE 78—Yeo 18, Tenorio 15, Malerhofer 14, Lanate 11, Reyes 9, Gaco 6, Conching 3, Chia 2, Gamboa 0, Araña 0.

Quarters: 20-20, 37-42, 60-66, 85-78

Second Game

MAGNOLIA 64—Williams 25, Valenzuela 7, Rizada 7, Santos 6, Co 5, Barcellano 4, Isip 4, Misolas 3, Almeda 2, Bombeo 1, Cutler 0, Te 0, Jones 0.

HAPEE-PCU 62—Espinas 13, Belga 12, Castro 11, Razon 11, Moreno 8, Gonzales 5, Baculi 2, Solis 0, Bucao 0, Sanz 0.

Quarters: 17-18, 32-31, 51-48, 64-62

GAMES TOMORROW
(San Andres Gym, Malate)
2 p.m.—TeleTech vs Harbour Centre
4 p.m.—Granny Goose vs Rain or Shine

Hot Real Spicy captures Silver Cup pulling away

CARMONA, CAVITE—REAL Spicy is in the hottest form he's ever been, and his rivals found that out the hard way.

The favored Real Spicy ran down the P1.75 million PCSO First Gentleman Silver Cup field under Louie Balboa yesterday to validate his claim as the champion local charger of the land.

The handsome 4-year-old by Real Quiet out of Spicy Tale punished the lean, five-horse field with a sizzling run at the San Lazaro Leisure Park, prevailing over Wind Runner by at least 15 lengths to put an emphatic end to what was dubbed as a close race.

It was the sixth straight win this year for the Hermie Esguerra-owned champion, and experts are now starting to compare the chestnut colt to Esguerra's most revered charger—the retired Wind Blown.

"I think it is too early to do the comparison now," Esguerra said. "It is my hope, though, that Real Spicy can follow in the footsteps of Wind Blown. "I'm happy that Real Spicy did not disappoint his backers."

Real Spicy, the winner of the Triple Crown's third leg last year, started near the rear and thundered to the lead, with rival Speed Advantage in hot pursuit, as the field passed the judges' stand for the first time.

Balboa worked Real Spicy to a comfortable advantage from there before zooming away near the far turn to finish with a time of 2 minutes 05.5 second for the 2,000-meter journey.

The winning time was just a full second slower than the track mark jointly held by imported gallopers Wild Orchid and Stowaway Lass. Real Spicy turned in impressive quarter clockings of 23', 25, 25', 25, 26'.

Wind Runner was able to rally in the final bend to finish second, while Chariot of Fire nipped Speed Advantage, the Presidential Gold Cup winner last year, for third place.

The win was worth another P1.1 million for Esguerra, who said he will rest his charger for at least a month unless a major stakes race is slated. *With a report from Musong Castillo*

60 fights in NCA 5-cocker at Roligon tomorrow

MORE THAN 60 FIGHTS HAVE BEEN ROSTERED in the National Cockers Association's second 5-cock derby for the month at the Roligon Mega Cockpit in Parañaque City tomorrow. Host is Gerry Ramos. In the May 9 NCA 5-cocker at the same venue that featured 103 fights, ESJ Daboy of Erwin Javeloza and

SPORTSWATCH

Iloilo Coliseum June 17-18 of Chito Tinsay scored 5 points each to share the championship. In second place with 4.5 points each were RT 114 of Attorney Santos and Boy de Roca and Magic Wing Sundance of Boy Torres and Rey Diamante. JMS Gold Quest of Jerry Sarasola and ESJ Papa of Benjie Lim took third place with 4 points each.

SJC cockfest gets going

PROMINENT COCKERS and breeders from Metro Manila converge today at San Juan Coliseum for a special 4-cock derby sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000. The first of the 80 fights begins at 5 p.m. Invited by hosts Renato Shio and Ariel Garovillo are Patrick Antonio, Boy de Roca, Dicky Lim, Louie Cua, Gerry Ramos, Eric dela Rosa, Pepito Ngo, Boy Royo, J. Paneda, Tony Antonio, Danny Ty, Romero Yu, Benjie Lim, Tony Lasala, Cris Milla and Tony Panopio, among others. Also lined up at SJC this week are the GCAP 5-cock derby on Wednesday and the 5-cocker of Tony Antonio on May 20. The SJC 9-Cock International Derby unfolds on June 5, 7 and 9 with at least P5 million cash at stake. For inquiries, call 725-5369.

Bacolor Gold derby today

AT LEAST 75 QUALITY fights are on tap in the Bacolor Gold 5-cock derby starting at 5 p.m. today at the Makati Coliseum. Host Efren Canlas said winners of the derby sponsored by B-Meg Derby Ace will receive a guaranteed prize of P700,000. Canlas will be supported by cockers from Central Luzon as well as members of the Pinoy Cockers Association. Meanwhile, three cockers topped the Summer Salpukan derby hosted by the WTJ Sports and Amusement Corp. last Saturday. With identical 6-0 win-loss slates were guest participant Noriaki Morita of Japan (JGBA Morita), Richard Bates and Col. Kati Kaligbak (Suwerteng Magkasama) and the AS Gold Cup Group

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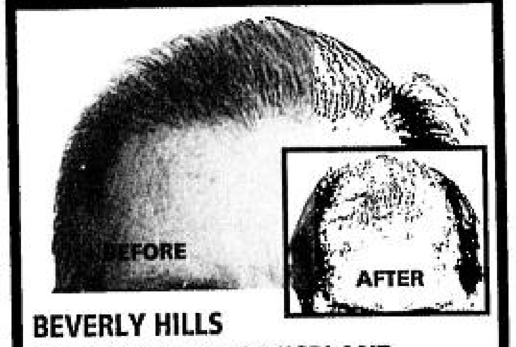

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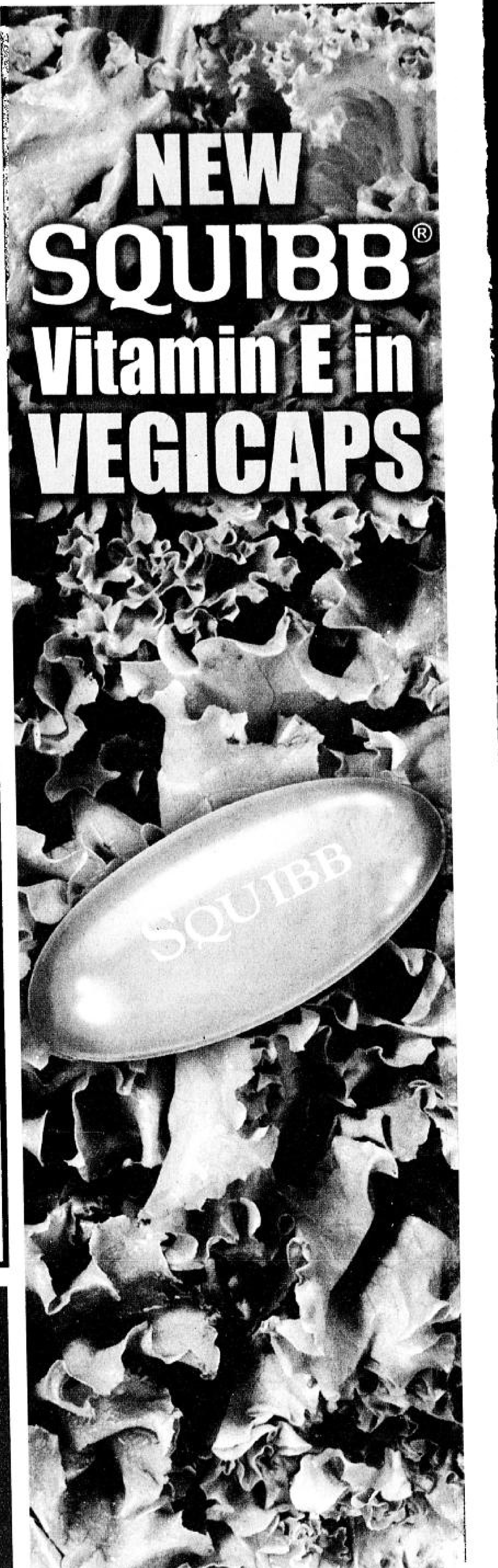

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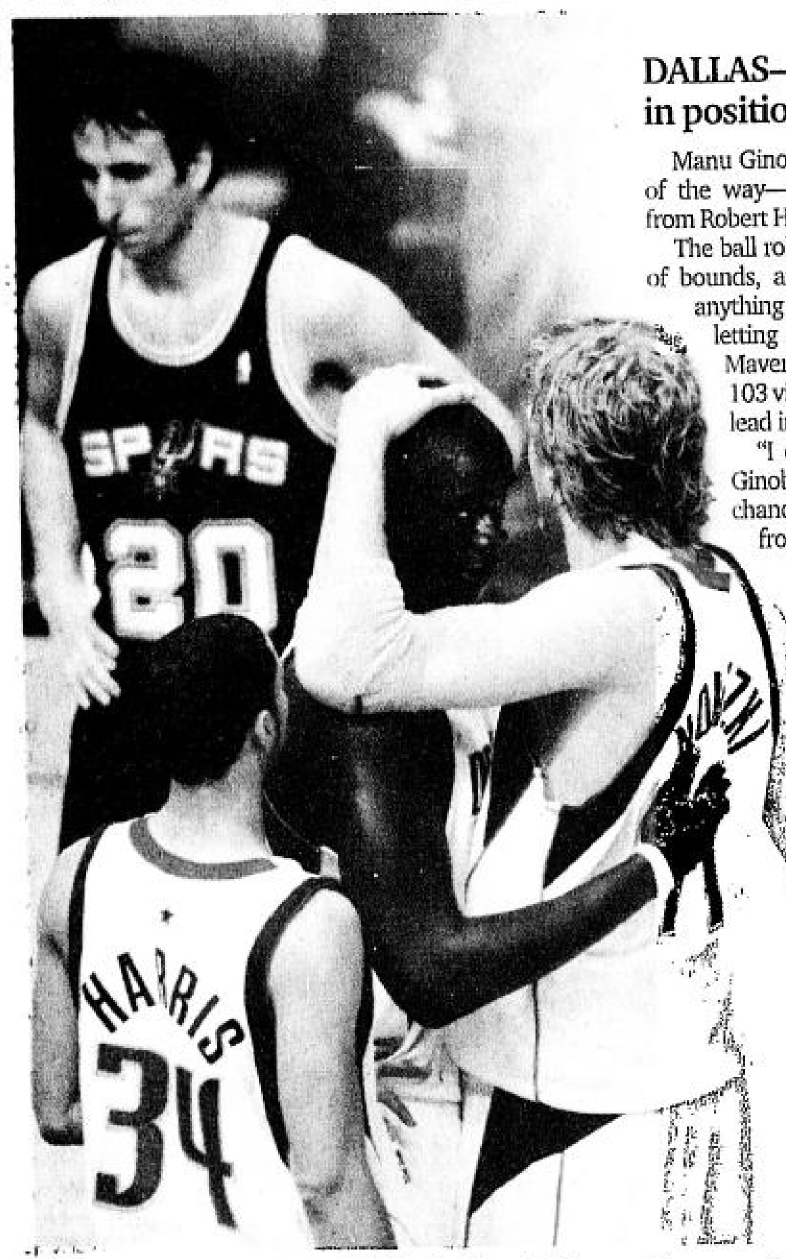

DALLAS' Devin Harris (left), Dirk Nowitzki and DeSagana Diop jubilate as Spurs guard Manu Ginobili walks across the court. REUTERS

DALLAS—TIM DUNCAN GOT THE SAN ANTONIO SPURS in position to pull out a victory.

Manu Ginobili nearly took them the rest of the way—until he fumbled a handoff from Robert Horry in the closing seconds.

The ball rolled across midcourt, then out of bounds, and the Spurs couldn't make anything out of a wild last-gasp chance, letting Dirk Nowitzki and the Dallas Mavericks cling to a thrilling 104-103 victory Saturday night and a 2-1 lead in their second-round series.

"I don't know what happened," Ginobili said of the squandered chance. "Someone tipped the pass from Robert. It was an unfortunate play."

It happened so fast that Mavs coach Avery Johnson credited Josh Howard for getting his fingers on it, while Howard credited Jason Terry and Devin Harris.

Harris said he did it, making him the star for a second straight game. He was a surprise starter in Game 2, when he scored 20 points and energized Dallas to a 22-point victory.

"I was able to get a hand in without fouling and got a little piece of the ball," said Harris, who scored 24 points on 7-of-14 shooting.

Nowitzki scored 21 of his 27 points from the foul line, including a go-ahead pair with 7.9 seconds left.

He also had 15 rebounds and played the final 1:05 with a badly twisted ankle suffered on the play when Duncan fouled out.

"He came back out there and gutted it out," Johnson said.

Duncan left with a season-high 35 points and 12 rebounds. It was his third straight great game this series, yet he and the Spurs are going to have to be better to keep alive their title defense.

They go into Game 4 on Monday night trying to shake a daunting fact: Since Duncan arrived, San Antonio has never won a series it trailed after three games.

The last time the Spurs were behind this deep in the playoffs was the last one they lost, against the Los Angeles Lakers in the second round two years ago.

"We're usually in a position where we're up after three games," Duncan said. "But it is what it is. We're going to have to come out and know the importance of this game."

Said Dallas' Jerry Stackhouse: "We hope they don't have much more than they had tonight."

San Antonio, which trailed by 13 before halftime, regained the lead in the final six minutes. The lead kept changing hands the rest of the way, with Dallas hanging in by making 18 of 19 free throws, until Stackhouse went to the line with two seconds left following Ginobili's bobble.

He missed the first, then intentionally missed the second. His attempt to hit the rim and hope time ran out in the scramble for the rebound backfired when he thudded the ball off the backboard. *AP*

James' triple-d

CLEVELAND—LEBRON JAMES LIFTED the young boy, kissed his head and pulled the tiny child close. Cradling the 1-year-old in his rippling arms, Cleveland's star carried his son off the court.

It was LeBron Jr.'s turn for a ride.

Daddy already gave one to the Cavaliers.

James scored 15 points in the fourth quarter and posted the second triple-double of his first visit to the NBA playoffs, leading Cleveland to an 86-77 win over Detroit on Saturday that cut the Pistons' lead to 2-1 in their second-round series.

Getting his only rest at halftime, James finished with 21 points, 10 rebounds, 10 assists and four steals for the Cavaliers, who played with more confidence than in Games 1 and 2 and ensured they will play at least two more games this season.

"Lo and behold he gets a triple-double in a second-round playoff game against possibly the best team in the league," s Cavs coach Mike Brown, marvelin James' latest feat. "I say it all time—he's special."

Anderson Varejao, Cleveland's m haired forward, added a career-high points and Flip Murray, starting in pl of Larry Hughes, had 13 for the Cavali who went 11-of-15 from the floor percent) and 9-of-9 from the line in fourth.

Cleveland can even up the best-of-s en series at home in Game 4 on Mond.

"We knew we couldn't lose Game home," James said. "That would h dug us too big of a hole to get out of. took care of home. But we don't wan feel too good about ourselves about t We just have to protect home."

Rasheed Wallace warned the Caval not to feel too giddy.

"They did what they were suppose

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SPORTS TOURISM

World's top water skiiers coming for Cam Sur rite

SOME OF THE WORLD'S FINEST WATER skiiers and wakeboarders are seeing action in an exhibition performance to highlight the grand opening on May 21 of the Cam Sur Watersports Complex in Cadlan, Pili, Camarines Sur.

World's No. 1 junior men skiier Sam Collins of Australia, second-ranked Peter Pascal Schmidt of Germany, Open women's No. 1 Eva Koch of Germany, No. 3-ranked junior Heather Johnson of the United States, and Austria's Daniel Fetz, ranked No. 9 in the world in the Open men's class, head the cast of stars who will display their wares in a two-hour run.

Philippine Water Ski and Wakeboard Federation (PWWF) president and Camarines Sur Gov. Lray Villafuerte is spearheading the show together with Catanduanes Gov. Lee Verceles and sportsman JV Borromeo.

"My main objective is to develop and promote water skiing, wake boarding, wake skating and other water sports in the country and to promote the Philippine as a viable tourist destination for water sports enthusiasts," said Villafuerte.

The PWWF will host the foreign riders in cooperation with the provincial government of Camarines Sur.

The six-hectare Cam Sur facility is the first world-class complex of such kind in the country and boasts of a six-point cable ski system from Germany.

VILLAFUERTE

Tailored for wake boarding, wake skiing, water skiing and knee boarding, the watersports complex aims to attract enthusiasts from all over the world with its facilities and relaxing environment.

The Cam Sur complex, through the PWWF, is also bidding to host the 2008 Cable Wakeboard World Championships, said Villafuerte.

The governor said the complex will help expose Filipino water skiers and wakeboarders to world-caliber competitions.

"The opportunities available to talented wake boarders are endless," Villafuerte said. "All they need is support, and the PWWF is committed to give them the chance through the various national and international competitions that they will soon be participating in."

The opening of the watersports complex will coincide with the Kaogma Festival, which celebrates the province's 428th Foundation Day. Dubbed as "The World's Hottest Festival," the Kaogma runs for nine days, from May 20 to 28.

RP duathlon ace a future triathlon star

NATIONAL DUATHLON CHAMPION RYAN "Bad Boy" Mendoza led the age group winners in the recently concluded 12th Legenda-Subic Bay International Triathlon hosted by SBMA.

Mendoza, the reigning 2006 Asian duathlon (run-bike-run) champion, earned the respect of regular triathletes with his impressive performance, coming from way behind after doing 34 minutes in the initial 1.5K swim leg where he finished 45th.

Mendoza won the 30 to 34 age group with a time of 2:22.51, followed by Abe Tayag, 2:33.59, and PowerBar brand manager Raul Cuevas in 2:36.25.

Other male age group winners were Joseph Rana 2:34.14, Jeremiah Tambor 2:47.56, and Reymark Dabu 2:49.04 in the 20 to 24 age group; Leian Cruz 2:26.18, Alexander Leuterio 2:39.29, and Andy Vaughn 2:45.51 in the 25 to 29 age division; Christopher Pollard 2:24.28, Mark Candelaria 2:25.58 and Jojo Macalintal 2:29.09 in the 35 to 39 age group.

Joe Wojcik emerged champion in the 40 to 44 age group in 2:29.54. Burke Fishburn and Mark Buckley were second and third in 2:32.37 and 2:39.06 respectively.

Alvin Alindogan topped the 45 to 49 group in 2:35.14 followed by Bishan Servanez, 3:15.18, and Alex Chen, 3:21.09. Niels have won the 50 to 54 group in 2:51.49 with Carlos Viola-Santos as runner-up in 3:26.48. Ernesto Rivera took the 55 to 59 crown in 3:26.05, followed by HSBC's Warner Manning in 3:36.54 and Pio Salvador, 4:08.44.

Alberto bags nat'l aeromodeler title; Neri rules Masters

TOTI ALBERTO LIVED UP TO HIS billing as one of the country's finest aeromodelers by ruling the precision aerobatics intermediate class of the 20th Philippine National Aeromodelers Championship at the Reclamation Area in Cebu City recently.

Alberto, who won the sportsman class last year, topped the two of the three rounds to bag his second title.

He edged Michael Chua of Cebu Aeromodelers Club, Erwin Dematera and Anthony Ballesteros of Manila, Armando Ereneta and Chepit Dulay of Bacolod.

Past experiences from superbike and motocross racing came in handy for the 37-year-old Alberto in dominating the field by flying his Futaba. MK extra 300 remote control airplane with quick reflexes.

"When I got a low score in the first heat, I did not give up," said Alberto, who is also a three-time National Superbike champion. "I just did my best in the next round, left all mental baggages behind."

The victory gave Alberto a chance to move up to the advance class and will face stiff competition as this year's class was easily won by Harry Taylor of Dumaguete Aero Club.

"I picked up flying remote-control airplanes at racetracks as a handful of fellow participants would bring helicopters and airplanes to relax between heats," recalled Alberto, who manages the KTM-Access Plus motocross team.

TITUS Alberto (center) with wife Joy and fellow competitor Ken Hirose.

CACI's Jay Jay Neri dominated the Masters class by winning all three rounds and will represent the Philippines in Japan for the upcoming Asian F3A competition.

Paolo Montemayor of Manila breezed to a golden finish in the sportsman category.

The annual tournament was organized by Cebu Aeromodelers Club Inc., Federation Aeronautique Internationale, 3D Hobbies and Sports Association Inc. and sponsored by Lils O.S. Futaba.

Barnachea wrests

From page A33

meter stretch called "Sungay Road" is ready to either make or break an aspiring champion's dream.

Red Bull assistant skipper Tomas Martinez jumped to fourth spot, 4:59 off, while rookie Irish Valenzuela of Cossack Vodka was fifth with a 5:28 deficit but only two seconds up on the sixth-running Renato Sambrano, his Cossack Vodka captain.

Davadilla, who gave up on his quest for an unprecedented third Tour title, improved to seventh from ninth but with a 10-minute and 24-second deficit from 7:56 off at the start of the day.

Rookie Harvey Sicam dropped to eighth from third, now 11 minutes and 31 seconds off with Eusebio Quinones (15:28) of GO21 and Wilfredo Calosa (15:34) of One Shot Wonder at ninth and 10th overall, respectively.

STAGE 3 RESULTS

INDIVIDUAL

1. F. Feliciano (Air21), 5:19:36
2. S. Barnachea (Sunbolt), 5:20:18
3. E. Obosa (Inca), 5:20:56
4. T. Martinez (Red Bull), 5:21:11
5. A. Quirimit (Elixir Sports), 5:22:58
6. I. Valenzuela* (Cossack Vodka), same time
7. R. Sambrano (Cossack Vodka), same time
8. J. Ricafort (Elixir Sports), 5:24:17
9. E. Ballozar* (Cossack Vodka), 5:24:45
10. W. Davadilla (Mail & More), 5:27:32
11. M. Aleonar (Air21), 5:29:24
12. R. Gorantes (Go21), 5:30:06
13. H. Sicam* (Elixir Sports), 5:30:19
14. E. Quinones (Go21), same time
15. J. Guevarra* (Go21), same time
16. J. Calderon (Red Bull), same time
17. W. Calosa (One Shot Wonder), 5:32:53
18. M. Reyes (Cossack Vodka), 5:33:44
19. H. Mangahis (Sunbolt), 5:33:57
20. P. Calosa* 5:35:24
21. J. Torres (E
22. B. Sapmo*
23. F. Sersenia*
24. G. Rogasc 5:37:50
25. D. Mara 5:41:44
26. A. Espino (
27. J. Critativo* 5:43:40
28. S. Torres* (

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do," he said. "We are still going to win this series. We're not going to let one game discourage us."

The Cavaliers won without Hughes, who was with his grieving family in St. Louis following the unexpected death of his 20-year-old brother, Justin.

Richard Hamilton scored 22 points, Chauncey Billups 20 and Ben Wallace had 13 rebounds for the Pistons, who shot only 39 percent from the floor after blistering the nets in opening a 2-0 lead.

Detroit also had 16 turnovers, twice as many as in Game 2.

"We turned the ball over too much, making plays that we don't usually make," Billups said. "We got into the tempo that we wanted it in. We knew they wanted to run. We kept them from that. And they guarded. They grinded. You've got to give them credit."

Even if the Cavaliers don't rally to dethrone the two-time defending Eastern Conference champions, James and his teammates have made their first visit to the postseason since 1998 a memorable one.

The 21-year-old James can take a bow for that, saving his best when it mattered most and carrying the Cavs down the stretch.

"That's what he does," Billups said. "He's a great player, a phenomenal athlete. He does things that most guys can't do. He put his team on his back and willed himself to some great plays."

Stealing one of Hall of Famer George Gervin's signature moves, James hit an 11-foot finger roll as the Cavaliers, who trailed by 10 points in the third, took their first lead of the fourth at 66-64.

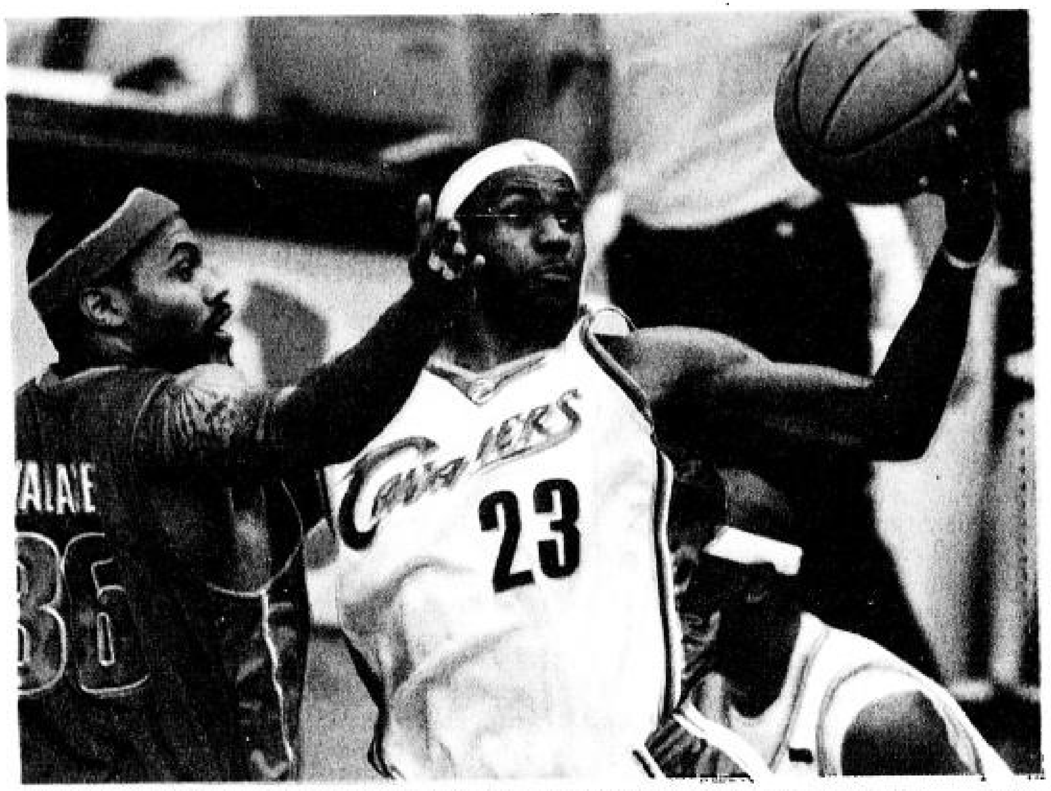
Later, he drove for a layup to put Cleveland ahead 74-70 with 2:44 left. Coming out of a timeout, James grabbed Cavs guard Damon Jones near the scorer's table and told him, "Let's win a game. C'mon."

The Cavaliers followed him.

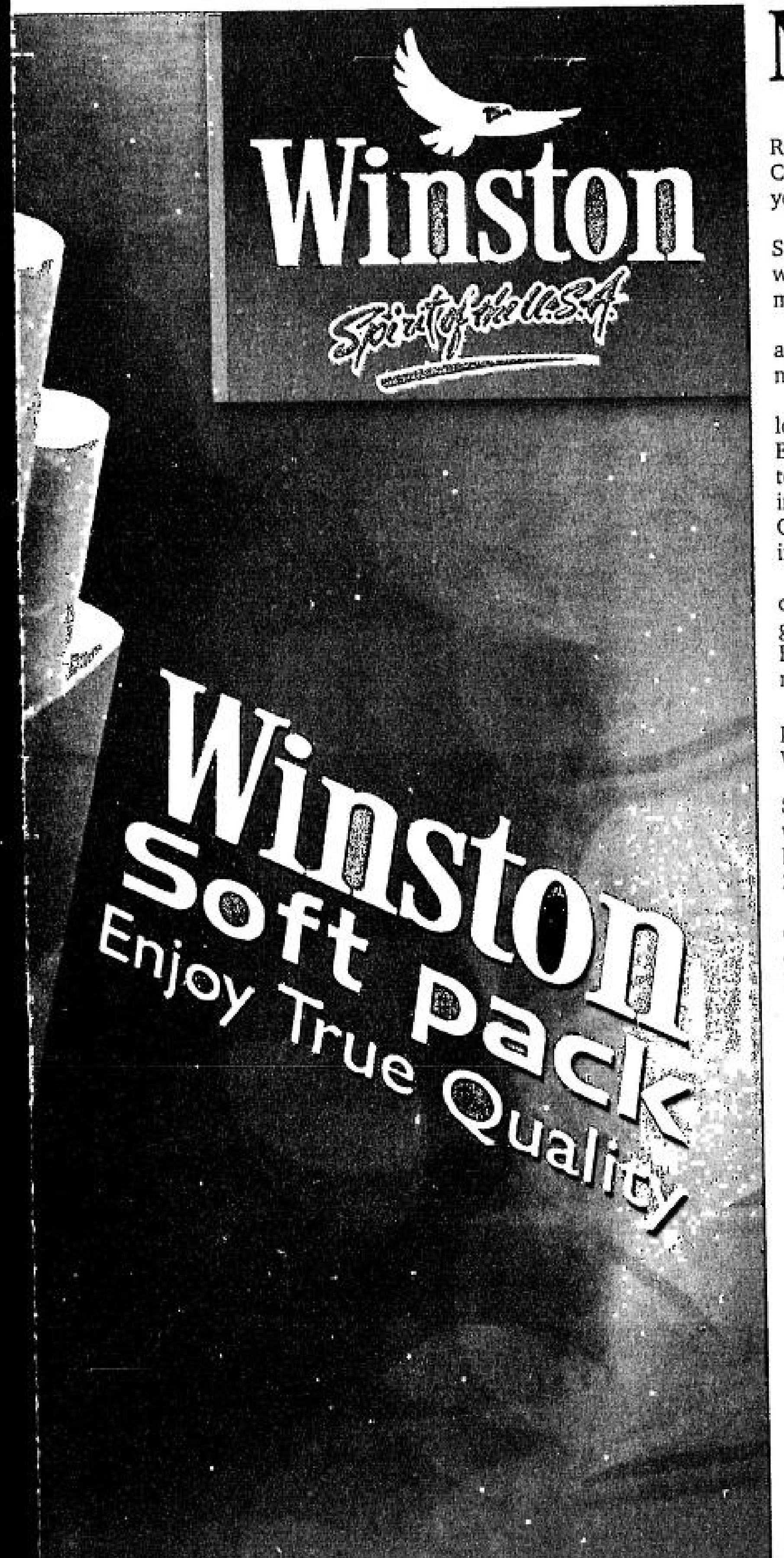
James made a steal on Detroit's next possession and hit two free throws to make it 76-70 with 2:20 left. The Pistons, though, closed within 78-74 on two foul shots by Rasheed Wallace with 1:32 remaining before James came up with the game's biggest play—and another monumental shot of his blossoming career.

On the right wing with the shot clock running down, James stepped back and drilled a 3-pointer—the Cavs were 1-of-12 on 3s at the time—over a closing Tayshaun Prince to make it 81-74 with 1:10 to go.

The bucket rocked sold out Quicken Loans Arena, which had been roaring with every head fake, rebound and pass James made in the final period.



CLEVELAND'S LeBron James snags a rebound off Detroit's Rasheed Wallace (left). REUTERS



nt Warning:
angerous to your health.

Nadal, Federer forge Rome clash

ROME—RAFAEL NADAL BEAT GUILLERMO Coria in the longest Open-era final in last year's Rome Masters.

The second-ranked Nadal is pretty sure Sunday's final against No. 1 Roger Federer won't last as long as last year's 5-hour, 14-minute marathon.

"I don't think so. The points with Federer are shorter than with Coria," Nadal said. "But maybe it will be 24 hours—you never know."

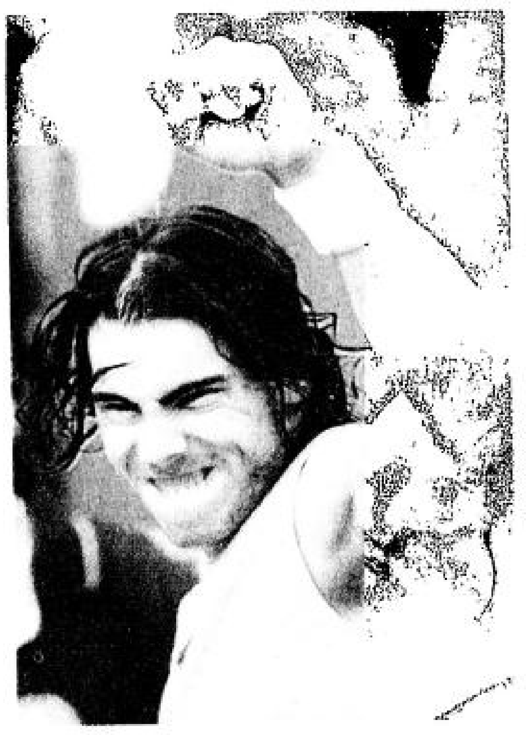
Nadal has handed Federer his only two losses this year, in finals at Dubai, United Arab Emirates, in March and the Monte Carlo Masters last month. He leads Federer 4-1 overall, including a semifinal win at last year's French Open, but Federer was looking forward to facing the Spaniard again.

"I'm ready," he said. "I think it's always special to have No. 1 vs No. 2. It's good for the game and I think both of us look forward to it. Especially on clay, it's a good challenge for me."

The Monte Carlo and Rome Masters are important claycourt tuneups for Roland Garros, which begins May 28.

Federer advanced to his 13th straight final Saturday with an error-filled 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (5) win over third-ranked David Nalbandian. Nadal beat fellow 19-year-old Gael Monfils 6-2, 6-2.

Nadal registered his 52nd straight win on clay and he can match Guillermo Vilas' Open-era record 53-match streak on the surface if he successfully defends his title.



RAFAEL Nadal celebrates the tough victory. AFP

"Playing the final in Rome is more important than the record," Nadal said. "Winning the tournament is the goal. If I get the record, fine."

Federer's win over Nalbandian tied him with Vilas for the second-most consecutive finals in the Open era. Ivan Lendl holds the record at 18 straight finals, set in 1981 and '82.

Federer struggled with his accuracy for long periods, but regained form midway through the third set.

After trading breaks twice in the decisive set, Federer took control of the tiebreaker with a backhand service return winner to go 6-4 up. Nalbandian followed his serve into the net on the crucial point, as he had done successfully on important points throughout the match.

"He was just better," Nalbandian said. "He did it at the right time."

The match ended when Nalbandian's forehand sailed long on Federer's second match point.

Monfils, who was playing in his first Masters Series semifinal, was never in contention against Nadal.

Before Nadal's two wins, Nalbandian handed Federer his last loss in November's final of the Masters Cup in Shanghai in a fifth-set tiebreaker.

"I had a lot of chances to break that I didn't take advantage of," Nalbandian said, referring to his converting five of 16 break points.

Federer ended with 50 unforced errors to Nalbandian's 53.

Nalbandian said that fast and slippery conditions contributed to the erratic play.

"It was difficult to stop your feet," he said.

Federer also reached the Rome final in 2003, losing to Felix Mantilla. *AP*

SHAKEY'S V LEAGUE

PCU, FEU tossers dispute semis slot

PHILIPPINE CHRISTIAN U AND FAR EASTERN U dispute the third semifinal berth today even as Ateneo fights for dear life against San Sebastian in the V-League presented by Shakey's at the Blue Eagle gym.

PCU and FEU share third place with 3-2 win-loss slates with the winner in their 4 p.m. encounter joining La Salle, unbeaten in five games, and Adamson (4-1) in the double round, carry over semifinal phase.

Admission is free. Games are telecast on ABC-5 every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday beginning at 4:30 p.m.

Both teams are coming off losses in their respective last games with PCU bowing to the streaking La Salle, 28-26, 25-13, 26-24, and Far Eastern losing to a resurgent San Sebastian College side, 25-21, 28-26, 25-16, both last Wednesday.

STANDINGS	W	L
La Salle	5	0
Adamson	4	1
PCU	3	2
FEU	3	2
SSC	2	3
Lyceum	2	3
Ateneo	1	4
UE	0	5

GAMES TODAY
(Blue Eagle Gym)
4 p.m.—PCU vs FEU
6 p.m.—Sas Sebastian vs Ateneo

Guest players Amelia Guanco and Lailanie Cervantes are again expected to spearhead PCU's bid while Far Eastern will lean on the power-hitting Mary Ann Manalo, Rachel Daquis and Wendy Semana.

Ateneo, meanwhile, hopes to snap its four game skid and keep its flickering semis hopes alive as it battles San Sebastian in the 6 p.m. main game of this event presented by Shakey's Pizza and organized by Sports Vision Management Inc.

But against the Lady Stags, the hosts will be taking on a team that has bounced back from three straight setbacks with back-to-back wins and got back into the thick of things in the tournament backed by Accel, Mikasa, ABC-5 and ABC Sports.

A San Sebastian victory will eliminate the seventh-running Ateneo from the semis race and will reduce the fight for the fifth and last semifinal berth to the Lady Stags and the Lyceum spikers.

Meanwhile, the Lady Pirates ousted the University of the East side, 25-11, 25-19, 25-19, late Saturday to likewise boost its own semis bid with a 2-3 card.

The Lady Warriors reeled to their fifth straight setback and are the doormats in the eight-team field.

lead; Feliciano ...

The event is being co-presented by Wow Magic Sing, organized by the Dynamic Outsource Solutions Inc. headed by Gary Cayton, supervised by the Philippine National Cycling Association headed by Paquito Rivas and sanctioned by the PhilCycling and supported by the Philippine National Police, DPWH, Department of Tourism and the Metro Manila Development Authority.

Runner-up in the opening stage and third placer in the second, Barnachea and fellow national team member John Ricafort peeled off from a 12-man lead group during the descent down Marcos Highway.

Not much is expected to happen when the field rides down to Angeles City today for the fourth stage, a "quiet" 194.4-km trip as far as the frontrunners are concerned.

One Shot Wonder),
r Sports), 5:35:33
Air21), same time
Red Bull), 5:37:19
n* (Mall & More),
(Mall & More),
ol Pap), 5:43:29
One Shot Wonder),
Mail & More), 5:45:27

29. O. Rendole (Inca), same time
30. Z. Mateo* (Inca), 5:45:49

OVERALL INDIVIDUAL
1. S. Barnachea (Sunbolt), 12:45:24
2. E. Obosa (Inca), 12:45:52
3. F. Feliciano (Air21), 12:46:20
4. T. Martinez (Red Bull), 12:50:23
5. I. Valenzuela* (Cossack Vodka), 12:50:52
6. R. Sambrano (Cossack Vodka), 12:50:54
7. W. Davadilla (Mall & More), 12:55:49
8. H. Sicam* (Elixir Sports), 12:56:55
9. E. Quinones (Go21), 13:00:53
10. W. Calosa (One Shot Wonder), 13:00:59
11. A. Quirimit (Elixir Sports), 13:01:51
12. M. Reyes (Cossack Vodka), 13:02:57
13. J. Ricafort (Elixir Sports), 13:03:02
14. M. Aleonar (Air21), 13:04:03
15. R. Gorantes (Go21), 13:04:44
16. J. Calderon (Red Bull), 13:04:57

MercedesTrophy RP debut up at S. Elena today

A CRACK AT INTERNATIONAL PROMINENCE awaits the winners of the first MercedesTrophy Philippines 2006 which fires off today at the challenging Makiling course of the posh Sta. Elena Golf Club in Cabuyao, Laguna.

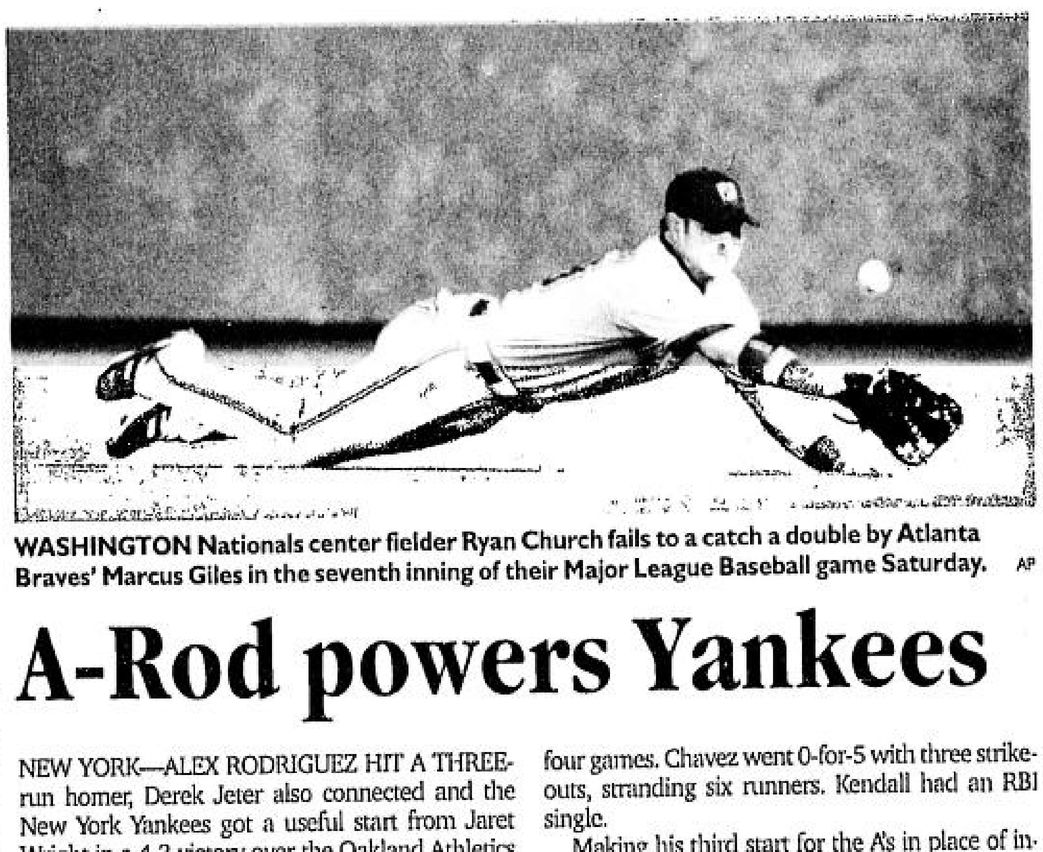
CATS Motors Inc. and corporate partners Cathay Pacific Airways and Smart Infinity are presenting the one-day tournament which makes the Philippines as the eighth Asian country in the world-renowned annual MercedesTrophy Golf.

Greg Yu and Felix Ang, CATS Motors Inc. chair and president, respectively, expressed their gratitude to DaimlerChrysler, makers of the Mercedes-Benz luxury vehicles, for including the country in the tournament's select roster.

Yu and Ang will lead the hitting of the ceremonial drives with Cathay Pacific country manager Vivian Lo, Smart Infinity president Polly Nazareno, Sta. Elena's Rico Tantoco, Lucerne's Ivan Yao and Arrow Shirt's Benito Lim before the shotgun tee-off at 8 a.m.

A Mercedes-Benz B170 Compact Sports Tourer, business-class tickets for two to Hong Kong from Cathay Pacific, an IWC Ingenieur AMG watch from Lucerne and a Canon 30D Digital Camera are up for grabs as holes-in-one prizes.

Tournament chair Emy Arcilla said the champions in the three divisions will be flown by Cathay Pacific via business class to Queensland, Australia as the country's entry in the MercedesTrophy Asian Regional Final this August.



WASHINGTON Nationals center fielder Ryan Church fails to a catch a double by Atlanta Braves' Marcus Giles in the seventh inning of their Major League Baseball game Saturday. AP

A-Rod powers Yankees

NEW YORK—ALEX RODRIGUEZ HIT A THREE-run homer, Derek Jeter also connected and the New York Yankees got a useful start from Jaret Wright in a 4-3 victory over the Oakland Athletics on Saturday.

Wright (1-2) held Oakland's slumping lineup in check into the sixth inning, helping the Yankees improve to 12-0 in day games. He got strong relief work from Scott Proctor and Kyle Farnsworth, who worked around Jeter's ninth-inning error to earn his first save with New York.

The A's have lost four straight, matching a season high, and seven of 10. They did get slugger Eric Chavez (infection) and catcher Jason Kendall (suspension) back after both missed the previous four games. Chavez went 0-for-5 with three strikeouts, stranding six runners. Kendall had an RBI single.

Making his third start for the A's in place of injured Rich Harden, Brad Halsey (1-2) gave up four runs, five hits and four walks in 4 1-3 innings. Orioles 11, Royals 1.

At Baltimore, Kris Benson allowed one run in seven innings, Ramon Hernandez and Javy Lopez both homered and drove in three runs, and Baltimore beat Kansas City to claim its first winning streak in May.

Miguel Tejada and Melvin Mora also homered for the Orioles, who hadn't won two in a row since April 28-29. *AP*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Cheating in Palaro: Protest and appeal

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

YOU HAVEN'T MET RICKY Florencio, a dedicated sports lover.

But you must've heard about the guy, a pioneering spirit in baseball around Marikina City.

Florencio, built like a flyweight, does his thing very quietly, putting up leagues for kids in various barangays in his city, working out foreign trips for selections and, as a whole, striving to develop honest, hardworking, responsible citizens through sports.

He works from behind the scene, letting the various bigwigs hog the limelight.

All of a sudden, the quiet, unassuming fellow has taken a fighting stance.

He wanted to be heard.

He has an urgent message, a protest and appeal.

He's calling on responsible people to rally against rampant cheating.

Listen to the agitated sports lover:

* * *

Dear Kuya Recah,

The Palarong Pambansa, center of school sports in the country, continued to be besieged by rampant cheating in the area of eligibility of players, particularly in the elementary division of the baseball tournament.

One of the strongest bases for the protest by a group of parents and coaches was a news report on ABS-CBN last May 11, where the mother of one of the suspected overaged players from Calabarzon admitted that her son, entered in elementary level baseball, was indeed already 19 years old.

Another stunning incident that I personally witnessed happened when EVRAA defeated NCR. Immediately after the game, players from the winning team, including their coach, ran to their van to avoid being checked or interviewed.

The vehicle they were riding in promptly sped away.

Many other developments came out in the open as the Palaro neared its culmination.

There were cheating claims in elementary football, elementary badminton, also in volleyball and athletics.

As a coach and parent involved in the national event, I appeal for aggressive and tactful action from responsible parties.

I hope and pray officials of the Dep-Ed, the Philippine Sports Commission, the national government, the private and public sectors will work together and come up with a permanent solution to this perennial problem.

They must put up a strong training program for coaches, specifically in the areas of virtues/values and character.

I also appeal to parents, teachers and players to be honest and truthful at all times.

Sports, after all, is a rich, excellent field for character development.

RICKY FLORENCIO
Marikina City

* * *

Florencio called up yesterday to report that NCR, despite the cheating, won both the elementary and high school championships in baseball.

That victory, of course, is overshadowed by the monster feats of cheaters who continued to lord it over in various fields, not sports alone.

SIX of the Philippines' best wall climbers strike a pose before leaving for Malaysia to compete in the ESPN X-Games Asia '06, the region's most prestigious multi-event competition for action sports. The team is led by the country's No. 1-ranked boulderer, Miel Pahati (second from left), who placed fourth in last year's X-Games. Joining Pahati are (from left) team manager Omar Ermita, Ina Flores, head coach Joey Cuerdo, Kristine Robles, Justin Calingasan and Jeff Capili. Christian Guerrero is also part of the team.

Pahati shoots for top Asian X-Games finish

By Jasmine W. Payo

MIEL PAHATI LOOKS ANYTHING BUT THE country's top bet in sport climbing.

So it no longer came as a surprise when reporters mistook him for one of the public relation officers during a recent press briefing.

Wearing a blue tie and a striped white polo shirt, the youthful Pahati did look more like a Makati office employee than an extreme game enthusiast.

And with his polite demeanor and lean frame, it was hard to imagine where Pahati gets the strength and aggressiveness that made him one of the top Asian climbers in the bouldering event.

"Last year, it was my first time in the (Asian) X-Games. But after the semifinals, I was number one," said Pahati. "And they were like, 'Who's that Filipino? He's so thin, he's just new.' They were surprised."

The 24-year-old Pahati impressively finished fourth in last year's edition in South Korea.

So this year, it's likely that Pahati will be among the climbers to watch in the ESPN X-Games Asia 2006 set in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

"Of course, we'd like to be in the top three this year," said Pahati. "Last year we came really close, but there was a slight slip in the end. I guess we're more mature this year and more solid."

Pahati will spearhead the RP team composed of Justin Calingasan, Jeff Capili, Christian Guerrero, Ina Flores and Kristine Robles.

Although the six athletes have been diligently training for the multi-event competition, head coach Joey Cuerdo said sport climbing demands more than physical strength.

"Climbing has a lot of analysis," said Cuerdo. "It has a lot of connection between the mental and the physical."

The Philippines will see action in two of the three events—bouldering and speed climbing.

More than 200 athletes from the Asia Pacific region will also be competing in aggressive inline skating and skateboarding. A Moto X demonstration will be among the sidelights of the event.

A new rule in this year's bouldering competition might make it tougher for the local bets. There will be no more trial period that will allow athletes to practice the course. Still, Pahati remains undaunted.

"You won't see what you're going to climb on until the last minute, the actual competition," said Pahati. "It's a bit tougher because there's pressure, you don't know what you're getting into. I like it better that way."

Softball head Angping at PSA Forum

EMBATTLED SOFTBALL LEADER HARRY Angping gives his side on the leadership controversy hounding the sport as he and other officials appear in tomorrow's PSA Forum at the main function room of the Pantalan Restaurant in Manila.

Joining them in the public sports program aired over Sports Radio 918 and sponsored by Pagcor and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza are the men and women behind the Enduro San Mig Light Adventure led by race director Rene Guevarra, project director Kit Acenas and Chesca Yujuico, assistant brand manager of SML. The session starts at 10:30 a.m.

Amonsot bucks knockdown, decisions Puerto Rican

WORLD BOXING ORGANIZATION ASIA PACIFIC super featherweight champion Czar Amonsot bucked a first-round knockdown and a one-point deduction to score a unanimous decision win over Puerto Rican Jose Reyes yesterday in the main event of a Guilty Promotions card at the Orleans Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas.

Amonsot was caught by a shot in the dying seconds of the opening round that sent him on all fours, but went on to dominate the remaining rounds of the 10-round fight.

The judges scored it 96-93, 96-93, 95-94 for the Filipino.

The Tagbilaran City native was penalized a point for a low blow in the middle round according to Dr. Ed de la Vega, who was at ringside.

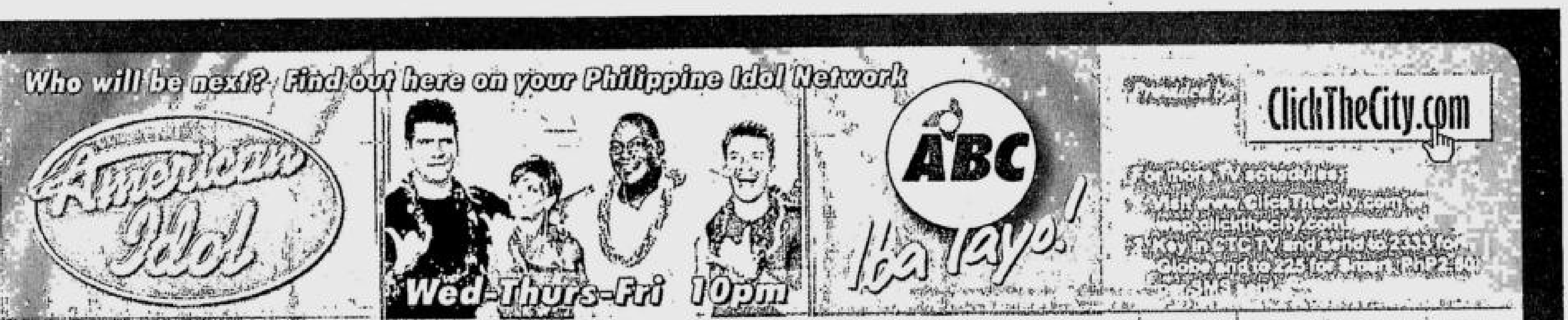
De la Vega designed the custom-made mouthpiece worn by Amonsot, which allowed the Filipino excellent breathing space as well as tough mouth protection from the blows all throughout the bout.

The win improved Amonsot's record to 16-1-1 with 10 knockouts, and lines him up for a possible defense of his title in Tagbilaran City in his next fight.

In the co-featured tenner, Along Denoy of Candijay, Bohol looked headed for an easy win over Esau Gaona before a freak clash of heads opened a cut on the latter in the second round.

The fight had to be stopped 15 seconds gone in the fourth due to the cut, and under the Nevada rules, the fight was declared a no-contest. *Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor*

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Monday, May 15, 2006


Who will be next? Find out here on your Philippine Idol Network
American Idol
Wed-Thurs-Fri 10pm
ABC
Iba Tayo!
ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5				National Geographic	Volleyball League				Sentro	How Clean Is Your House	ABC Action Movies				Big News	Fear Factor		Totoo TV	
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Outstanding Twins	TV Patrol World		Gulong Ng Palad	Sa Piling Mo	Pinoy Big Brother	Panday	Wonderful Life	OK Fine Whatever			Insider
AXN		A League Of Their Own					E Buzz	The 4400 (Season 2)		Pensacola (Season II)		Sports Disaster IV		Numb3rs (Season 2)		Lost (Season II)		House	
Cartoon Network	Police Academy	Richie Rich	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi	Codename: Kids Next Door	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	The Simpsons		Power Rangers Wild Force	PokeMon	Yu-Gi-Oh Double Duel		The Simpsons		Mucha Lucha!	Duck Dodgers	Justice League	Samurai Jack
Cinema One		Condemned				Minsan Lang Kitang Iibigin				Bahay Ni Lola 2				Sabel				Kapalit	
Cinemax		Mr. Deeds Goes To Town			Just Cause (4:45 PM)				Glass Trap (6:25 PM)			Happy Campers			Missing In Action			Dead Canaries (11:10PM)	
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	Revealed	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense		What Should You Do?		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	Mastermind	Law & Order		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Crossing Jordan		Bones		Cold Case	
Discovery Channel				Discovery Encore		The Greatest Ever		I Shouldn't Be Alive		Australia - A Natural History		Life Unlimited		Xtraordinary People		I Shouldn't Be Alive		The FBI Files	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	Mickey Mouseworks	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven	An American Tail			Black Hole High	So Little Time	Kim Possible	Totally Spies	Pirates Of The Caribbean: Curse Of Black Pearl	
ESPN		Pro Billiards '04, Sudden Death 7-Ball NV USA		Pool/ Snooker World Pool Masters '03 Holland															
ETC		America's Next Top Model 4		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Project Runway		Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		America's Next Top Model 4		ET Weekend	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Starting Over		The Maury Povich Show		The Jerry Springer Show		Dr. Phil		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition	The Ellen Show		Wheel Of Fortune	Jeopardy	The Biggest Loser		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition
EWTN	Benediction And Devotion	Chaplet Of Mercy/ Angelus	Bible Treasure Chest	Image Of God	Rosary With Mother Angelica	EWTN Gallery	G.K. Chesterton: The Apostle Of Common Sense II	Threshold Of Hope		Sunday Night With (Encore) Fr. Benedict Groeschel		Daily Mass Live		Holy Land Rosary/ Angelus	Good Or Evil: Who Decides?	The Gospel Of John	Freedom & Authority	Catholic Compass	
Fox News		Beltway Boys	Fox News Watch	Bulls & Bears	Cavuto On Business	Forbes On Fox	Cashin' In	Fox & Friends						Fox News Live					
GMA 7	Agawin Mo Man Ang Lahat	Now and Forever (3:15 PM)	Snow White Sweet Love		Sayuki	Dragonball Z	Gokusan	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Majika	Love Of The Condor Heroes		Jewel In The Palace		Lagot Ka, Isusumbong Kita			Saksi
Hallmark Channel		Child Of Our Time 2001		Back To You And Me				Bewitched	The Nanny	Judging Amy		Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye II		Judging Amy		I Do But I Don't			Judging Amy (11:45PM)
HBO			Covert Action			The Sea Wolves (5:15 PM)				Mary Reilly (7:15 PM)				In Good Company			Gremlins 2: The New Batch		
Hero TV	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Gamburagar	Gosaurer	Raijin-Oh	Beyblade G-Revolution	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Naruto	Mimo de Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Gosaurer
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Krusada Kontra Krimen		Japan Video Topics		ME TV		PTA Best Of The Philippines		Global Family Series	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	Jack Yard	The Late Show David Letterman		Bottomline		Afterburn		X-Men Evolution	Beat The Geeks	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Family Guy	The Late Show David Letterman		Jack In The Box			
Lifestyle Network	Get Color	30 Minute Meals	Wolfgang Puck	Sweet Dreams	Smart Solutions	Sensible Chic	Decorating Cents	Barefoot Contessa	Unwrapped	Hot Off The Grill	E! Extra Celebrity Adventures		NY Fashion Week	Martha		Radical Sabbatical	Genuine Article	Good Finds	Style Star
MTV Philippines		Wildboyz		MTV Jammed: Red Hot Chili Peppers	Pop Inc.		MTV Hits (with SMS)			Get Spotted	Homecoming	MTV Hits	Summerbreak Sessions: Halo	TRL		Wildboyz		Making the Video: RHCP Dani California	Brand New
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYXLOG	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mobile MYX		Urban MYX	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXLOG
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports Atbp	Dong Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Sila?	Teledyaryo W/ Rey Langit & Angelique Lazo		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo Final Edition		Dial M		Bantay OCW With Susan K			
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	SpongeBob SquarePants	My Life As A Teenage Robot	All Grown Up	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Four Eyes	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Salamat Sa Lotto				Alindog				Bad Boy				Julian Makabayan				Di Mapigil Ang Init
Qtv	Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin		Zipang	Kaleido Star	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Magic Ring	Irene	Noel	Project 11	H3O Hahaha...Over!		News On Q	Lupa Ng Kababalaghan		Irene	Over The Green Fields
RPN 9						Global Window	RPN Aksyon News	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	Score Tactics	NBA On RPN					Newswatch Now	Just For Laughs	Cargo For Truth	
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping		Quantum Global		Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		SBN Music Video			
Solar Sports										Sagupaan		NBA Playoffs Conf. Semis Game4					Solar Sports Desk		
Sports Plus				Golf Today	FIFA Preview Series 13	Ultimate Fighting Championship				Arena Football Tampa Bay @ Nashville						Eds Byron Season C'ship Final			
Star Movies		Sunshine State (3:05 PM)					Philber (5:25 PM)			From Russia With Love				The Deal			Uptown Girls (10:45PM)		
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Ed		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	My Wife And Kids	Still Standing	Yes Dear (Series 4)	Frasier	Monk		Seinfeld	My Wife And Kids
Studio 23	Bewitched	YuGi-Oh 3 & 4				Batman Beyond	Dragon Booster	Sports	Pinoy Big Brother	Wazzup Wazzup	The Bachelor Season 6		Charmed (8:20 PM)	Lost (9:10 PM)		News Central	Miss Match		Travel Time

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

STANDINGS	W	L
North Division		
Bacchus/Harbour	6	2
Forward Taguig	4	2
Batang Tagaytay	4	4
Spring Parañaque	3	3
Pangasinan	2	6
Laguna-Sta. Rosa	0	6
South Division		
Ozamiz Cotta	5	1
Iligan Crusaders	6	3
North Cotabato	5	3
Pagadian Explorers	4	3
Valencia	3	5
Iloilo Warriors	1	4

Bacchus/Harbour dribblers stop Ozamiz Cotta

OZAMIZ CITY—BACCHUS/HARbour Centre-Manila banked on ex-Ateneo Blue Eagle Magnum Membrere's triple in the dying seconds to snap defending champion Ozamiz Cotta's five-game winning run, 92-91, Saturday in the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBA national basketball championship before an overflow crowd at the Gov. Angel Medina Sr. gymnasium here.

With the count at 89-91 in favor of Ozamiz in the last 23 seconds, the host cagers of Mayor Reynaldo Parojinog turned the ball over. Membrere, surprisingly left open, then calmly sank his sixth three-pointer of the game with two ticks left, breaking the hearts of the hometown crowd.

"Magnum (Membrere) showed the kind of stuff he's made of," said coach Lawrence Chongson of Bacchus/Harbour, co-owned by Mikee Romero. "I'm proud the boys never gave up when we lost the lead in the second half. They did not back down."

With a 6-2 card, Bacchus/Harbour solidified its northern division lead in the tournament sponsored by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Spring Cooking Oil, Regent Foods, Firefly Lightings, Molten, Prime Channel.

Despite its first loss in six games, Ozamiz still leads the southern division.

Ozamiz was comfortably ahead, 91-81, with 5:08 left in the game when Bacchus/Harbour exploded with 10 points in a fiery windup.

The visiting Manilans and Mayor Sammy Co's Pagadian Explorers were playing at press time in Pagadian City.

The scores:

BACCHUS/HARBOUR 92—Membrere 22, Sta. Cruz 18, Pribdhas 15, Rotaga 10, Coyukang 8, Jay Cuevas 8, Masbang 4, Jun Cuevas 2, Hardin 2, Reyes 0, Pile 0.

OZAMIZ 91—Bansil 19, Llangco 15, Cavan 13, Guerrero 10, Yabut 7, Ilanga 7, Sampilo 7, BASco 6, Alberto 4, Alvarado 3, Delina 0.

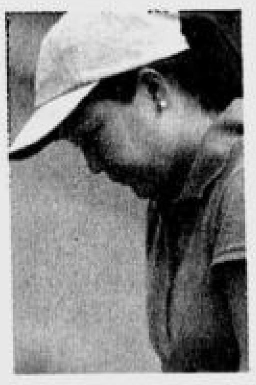
Quarters: 32-27, 60-54, 75-82, 92-91

Tourney of Champs under way at Eagle

By Jong Arcano

ABIERA

RODRIGUEZ


GODIO

THE BEST CLUB PLAYERS IN THE LAND GO THROUGH A BIG TEST of nerves and skill in the second National Tournament of Club Champions firing off today at the sprawling Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club in Gen. Trias, Cavite.

Corporate executives like Indren Naidoo, Jingy Tuason and Edmund Yee will mix it up with expatriates and jungolfers in the five-day event presented by Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corp. and INQUIRER Golf.

The men will be seeking a trip to the HSBC world match play in England while the ladies vie for the chance to witness the HSBC LPGA match play tilt in New Jersey.

Also on tap today is the Isuzu Skills Challenge, a side event of the NTCC which stakes prizes in four different special contests—driving, pitching, blasting and putting.

The Isuzu Challenge will be played after the stroke play qualifying round scheduled at 9:30 a.m.

PDI president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez and HSBC CEO and president Warner Manning will hit the ceremonial drives before the Isuzu Challenge at 3 p.m.

Backers of the NTCC are Sta. Lucia Realty, Callaway as official apparel, Titleist as the official ball, Philippine Airlines, Platonic the official hole-in-one sponsor, Isuzu, Pacific Air Media, Chivas Regal, The Travel Club and official hotel Microtel.

The entries:

Alabang: Indren Naidoo and Vinice Godio; Aguinaldo: Matet Salivio; Alta Vista: Irina Gabasa; Baguio Country Club: Bill Lawrence and Cha Diciano; Camp John Hay: Shean Bedi and Nanette Filer; Capitol Hills: Dennis Nicomedes and Maan Legaspi; Cebu Country Club: Kathleen Uy; Eastridge: Jong Soo Park and Tess Staub; Eagle Ridge: Jan Tambogon and Kwon Ye Seul; Forest Hills: Violy Pegels; Iloilo: Maggie Rivera; Manila Golf: Venjo Reyes; Manila Southwoods: Edmund Yee and Beachie Abiera; Mimosa: Kim Hee Youen; Mt. Malarayat: Gerald Katigbak and Lily Young; Orchard: Yasushi Kita and Marissa Romano; Rancho Palos Verdes: Alfonso Marcelino and Imelda Garcia; Riviera: Miko Yee and Cyna Rodriguez; Royal Northwoods: Rodel Mangulaban and Lyn Mangulabnan; Sherwood Hills: Yuichiro Nakanishi and Marlene Ty; Sta. Elena: Jingy Tuason and Vinice Godio; Summit Point: Val Plata; Tagaytay Highlands: Augusto Theodore de Jesus and Mabel Kawsek; Tagaytay Midlands: Oliver Gan and Beachie Abiera; Villamor: Rudy Amata; Valley: Zaldy Villa and Violy Pegels, and Wack Wack: Katya dela Cruz

Unbeaten Jewelers take on Warriors as MVBA's finals begin

CEBU CITY—UNBEATen M. Lhuillier Kwarta Padala-Cebu Jewelers face the fourth seeded Toyota-Iloilo Warriors and second seed Cebu Landmaster-Toledo play No. 3 Mantawi Traders at the start of their separate best-of-three semifinal series this week in the Visayas Division of the ML Kwarta Padala Mindanao Visayas Basketball Association (MVBA) tournament.

Toledo of realtor Joe Soberano and Mantawi of Mayor Thadeo Ouano open their series tomorrow at the Marcelo A. Barba Sports Complex in Toledo City.

M. Lhuillier of BAP chair Michel Lhuillier and the Iloilo Basketball League-backed Warriors start their own series at the New Cebu City Coliseum on Wednesday.

Toledo and M. Lhuillier enjoy home court advantage in their separate series.

The series winners will meet in another best-of-three encounter for the Visayas Division championship in the league backed by ML Kwarta Padala, Cokaliong Shipping Lines, Nature's Spring Drinking Water, Molten, Panasonic and Sulpicio Lines.

The Visayas Division champion will then play the Mindanao Division champion in a best-of-five series for the MVBA crown.

The Iligan Archangels of Mayor Lawrence Cruz became the first team to advance to the Mindanao Finals last May 12 when they beat Montaña Pawnshop-Davao, 80-71, and finish the series at 2-1.

GAME TOMORROW
(Barba Sports Center)
5:30 p.m.—Cebu Landmaster-Toledo vs. Mantawi Traders
(Semis B, Game 1)

GAME WEDNESDAY
(Cebu Coliseum)
5:30 p.m.—M. Lhuillier Kwarta Padala-Cebu vs. Toyota-Iloilo Warriors
(Semis A, Game 1)

Befuddled

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

THE RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT by officials of the Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines is intriguing.

Speaking before sportswriters during the PSA Forum at the Pantalan restaurant, BSCP chair Yen Macabenta said the staging of the Philippine 9-Ball Championship on Aug. 4-19, will mark the first time that the BSCP is conducting an official tournament to crown a true national champion. "Before this," he stressed, "we only had exhibition tournaments organized by private promoters, and they were not truly representative and comprehensive."

On the other hand, BSCP secretary general Julius Nidea said the Philippine 9-Ball Championship was conceived so that not only the established stars such as Efren "Bata" Reyes, Alex "The Lion" Pagulayan and Francisco "Django" Bustamante would shine, but also enable the promising players to show their mettle.

That said, one gets the impression these BSCP officials have taken an unfair evaluation of the achievements of Reyes, Pagulayan and Bustamante, not to mention the valuable support of their benefactors, former Assemblyman Jose "Popit" Puyat and billiards "godfather" Aristeo "Putch" Puyat of Puyat Sports.

As far as I'm concerned, the remarks were misleading and should be corrected at once. I say Reyes, Pagulayan and Bustamante have nothing more to prove. They are already champions in their own right. Are their achievements in the international billiards scene not enough? What more do the BSCP want?

As a longtime follower of the sport, I am also taking umbrage at Macabenta's remarks that past tournaments were only exhibition tournaments. So what?

Didn't he know that some of these so-called "exhibition" tournaments, particularly the ones organized by Puyat Sports, gave new meaning and dimension to the sport previously associated with gamblers and hustlers? How could one not feel good? Even though the Philippines is just a dot in the world map, it is now a force to reckon with in the international billiards scene. Reyes and Bustamante were once invited to compete in the elite 16-player field of the World Pool Masters 9-Ball tournament in London when richer, bigger and more powerful countries like the United States only received one invitation each.

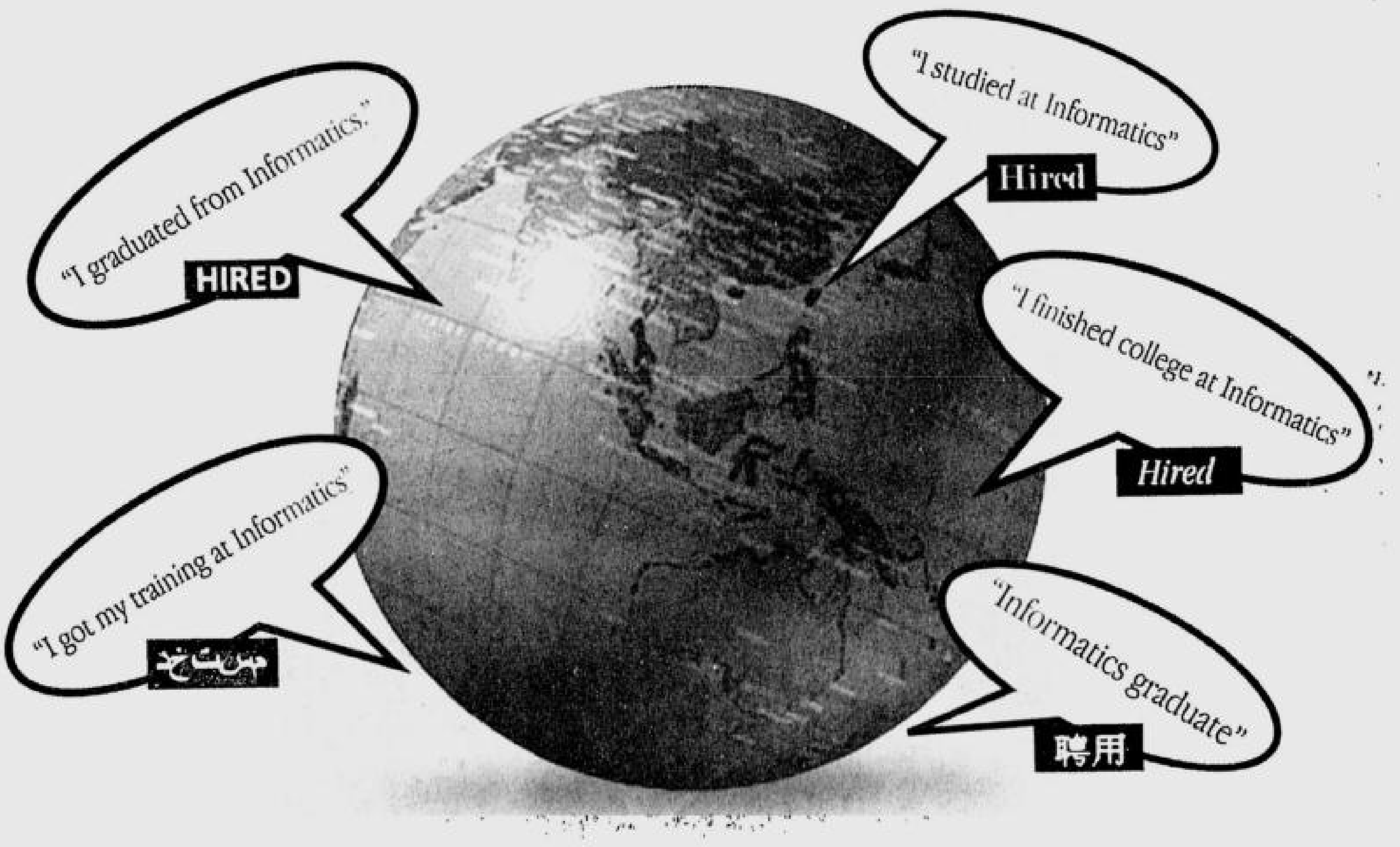
"Truly, Philippine billiards has arrived," proudly said team manager Rollie Vicente then.

Through the years, Vintage Promotions, Viva Sports, ABS-CBN, Jemah Television and Solar Sports in cooperation with Puyat Sports have staged many successful Philippine Open tournaments. And all have been well-attended affairs. Not only that, Puyat Sports, a nonprofit venture, have also brought to the country many of the world's most famous and toughest pool shooters. Among the sport's luminaries who came here to play were Americans Earl Strickland, a five-time world champion; multi-awarded Johnny Archer, the most-feared player in contemporary history; former US Open champion Cory Deuel, Rodney Morris and, some years back, the legendary Nick Varner, Jim Rempe, Mike Lebron, Jeremy Jones, Kim Davenport, Mike Sigel, acknowledged to be the best US pool player; and US ladies circuit standout Jeannette Lee, who played a challenge match with Efren Reyes.

From Europe, came former world champions Mika Immonen of Finland, Thorsten Hohmann and Ralph Souquet of Germany, Marcus Chamat of Sweden and Thomas Engert, also of Germany. Asia sent Taiwan's reigning World Pool champion Wu Chia-ching, Yang Chin-shun, San Miguel Beer-Asian 9-Ball Tour defending champion Kuo Po-cheng; Japan's Kunihiko Takahashi, Satoshi Kawabata and Akikumo Toshikawa and Korean champs Sin Young-park and Jeong Young-hwa.

Recently, the first ever Enerva Asian Ladies 9-Ball Championship was held, with world ranked No. 1 player Kim Gayoung of Korea emerging champion. Big firms have likewise been supporting these world-class events, among them San Miguel Beer, Tanduay, Hope cigarettes, Motolite, Café Puro, LG Collins and Enerva energy drink.

The Puyats have supported not only Reyes, who won the World Pool title in 1999, but also Bustamante, the world's No. 1 player in 1998; and a host of other notables that included Antonio Lining, Rodolfo Luat, Ramil Gallego, Gandy Valle, Dennis Orcollo, Warren Kiamco, and most recently, Pagulayan and Marlon Manalo.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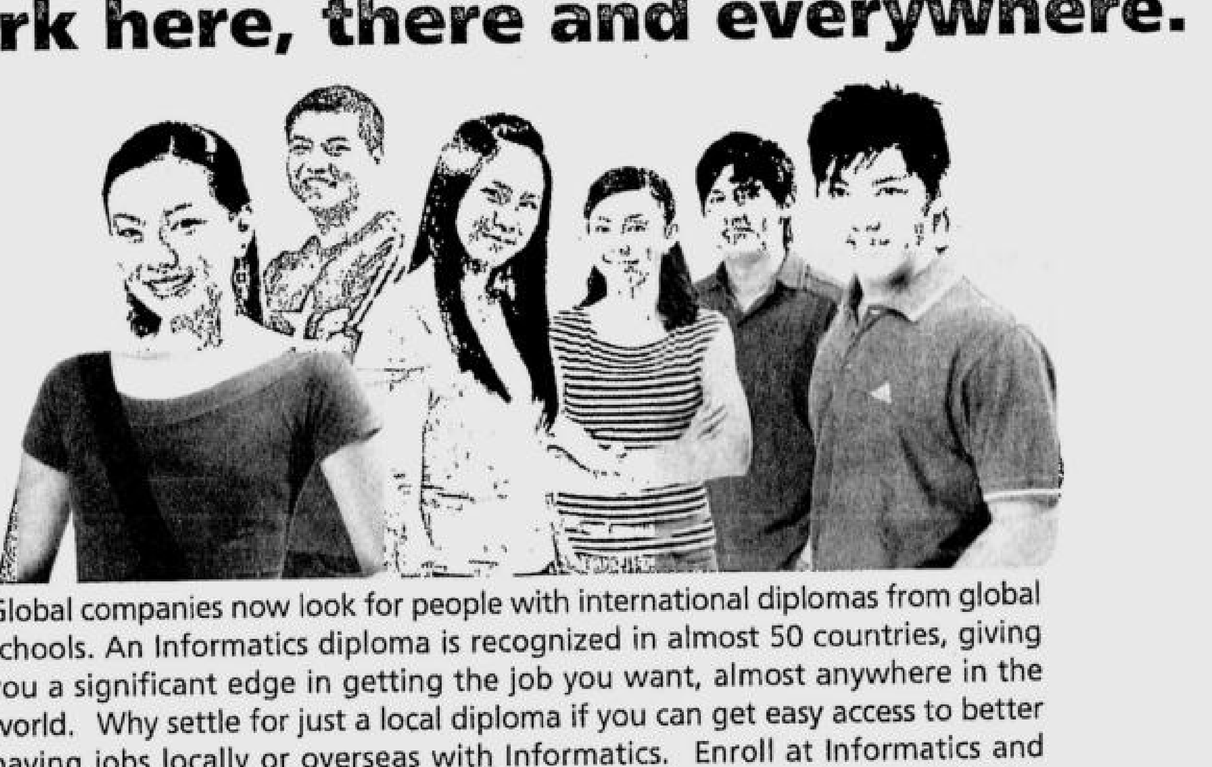

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SPORTS

Baguio battleground for junior net tour

THE 2006 HEAD PENN JUNIOR TENNIS Tour, billed as the country's biggest tournament for players 18 years and younger, serves up its penultimate leg in Baguio City starting today at the Athletic Bowl in Burnham Park.

The tour has held tournaments in the cities of Davao, General Santos, Cagayan de Oro, Dumaguete, Bacolod, Iloilo, Liloan and Cebu in the past seven years to discover talents who will be developed into international-caliber players. Last year's edition drew more than 1,000 participants.

Competitions are in the boys' and girls' 18-under, 16-under, 14-under, 12-under and 10-under unisex. Trophies, medals and sporting goods await the winners of the tour organized by Dynamic Sports Corp. (DSC), the exclusive distributor of Head and Penn rackets.

The final leg will be held at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center from May 21-26. For inquiries, call the Philta office at 523-6415 and DSC at 925-1578 or 925-2391.

RP women's team member Bien Zoleta and junior Davis Cuppers Pablo Olivarez II and Francis Largo use Head Penn rackets.

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FORD SHOOTOUT

Grand Finals cast of teams complete

ROYAL NORTHWOODS, Manila Golf and Tagaytay Highlands sent two teams each among the last nine qualifiers that completed last weekend the 15-club roster for the Grand Finals of the Ford National Team Shootout set at the Orchard and Sta. Elena Golf and Country Clubs on May 25-26.

The quartet of Boy Unson, Arnel Arteche, Lim Mangulabnan and Ynez del Rosario of Northwoods topped the Luzon North Satellite, hosted by Luisita Golf Club, with a net 56. The team had a gross score of 61 that featured an eagle and five birdies en route to a 29 in the back nine.

Another Northwoods squad of Omar Dunca, Danny Clarin, Chris Wan and Jun Maliclic placed second via a countback over the Baguio Country Club squad of Mitos Benitez, Louie Siapno, Euls Agustin and Ely Lagman.

Both finished with net 61s to clinch the other qualifying slots in the tournament that also featured teams from Camp John Hay and Mimosa.

The two MGC squads which advanced from the Luzon East Satellite were the father and daughter team of Jojo and Ina Guingona together with Malou Gamboa and Tony Olbes and the Lim brothers—David, Jason, Vincent and Jonathan.

Alabang's foursome of Rick and Verni Oledan and Indren and Christine Naidoo rounded out the qualifying cast from the Luzon East leg held at Wack Wack. Teams from Valley, Forest Hills and Eastridge also competed.

TEAM SHOOTOUT 2006

ALABANG GCC's Rick and Verni Oledan and Indren and Christine Naidoo (first to fourth from left) show their trophies after qualifying in the Luzon East Satellite finals.

The two qualifiers from Tagaytay Highlands made it behind Luzon South Satellite winner Mt. Malarayat, which played host to the event also joined by teams from Canlubang and Sta. Elena.

Exploiting their familiarity of the all-weather course in Lipa City, Gigi Ortile, Jeck Mendoza, Val Plata and Arnel Barro shot a net 60 (65 gross, 5 handicap) to rule the event.

Joining them in the Grand Finals were the Tagaytay Highlands quartet of Isaac Go, Edgar See, Peter Kawsek and Mike de Joya, and the team of Farrah and Windy Imperial, Mabek Kawsek and Clifford Lichaytoo.

Teams from Cebu Country Club, Iloilo, Manila Southwoods, Riviera and Eagle Ridge have earlier booked their places in the Grand Finals of the tournament presented by Ford Motors Phils. in cooperation with Pharmaton, and sponsored by the Federation of Golf Clubs Phils. Inc. and Swing Magazine.

The champion team in the grand finals will win an all-expense paid trip to Spring City Golf Lake Resort in Kunming City in China.

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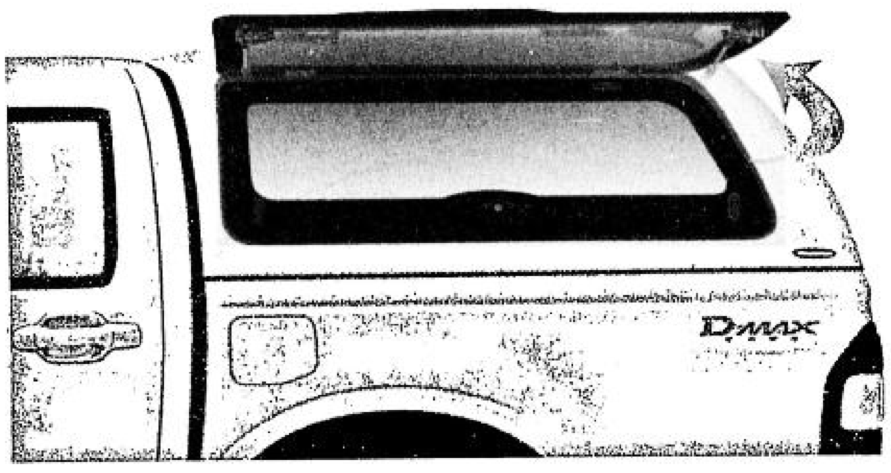

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde
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How Nikki mends her broken heart

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

QUITE TELLINGLY, NIKKI GIL IS LISTENING these days to the soundtrack of the European movie, "Il Postino."

"It consists of Pablo Neruda's poems, as read by various artists, among them Sting, Madonna, Julia Roberts and Ethan Hawke," Nikki says.

Isn't it torture to listen to romantic verses while nursing a broken heart? It's been only two months since the 18-year-old Nikki parted ways with her boyfriend of eight months, Gabriel Valenciano.

"I really enjoy listening to [the soundtrack]," she confesses. "It allows me personal moments for contemplation."

Since that was her first relationship and her first breakup, do tears fall when she's alone?

"No *naman*,". she says, but quickly backtracks. "Not that often, anyway. I'm a girl; it's a given that I'm sentimental."

She makes it clear: "I'm neither bitter nor angry. In fact, Gabriel and I have remained friends."

Mom Julie says the kids' relationship was "ideal" at the start because Gabriel's parents—singer Gary and manager Angeli—are "friends from church."

Nikki volunteers: "[His parents] are nice people. They've been very diplomatic about everything. As if nothing happened... nothing bad happened anyway. It has served its purpose. I'm wiser now and so is he."

The only downside are the inevitable intrigues—the most hurtful of which claims that she's using the breakup to promote herself, specifically her new single (under EMI), which is coincidentally titled "Forever Is Not as Long as It Used to Be."

"I'm not *that* shallow," she exclaims. "I cannot play around with matters of the heart."

On a positive note, she believes the sad chapter will help her grow as an artist. "That's why I always say I have no regrets. I sing with more heart now."

"Yes, it was a learning experience for her," Julie agrees. "They were just too young for a mature kind of relationship."

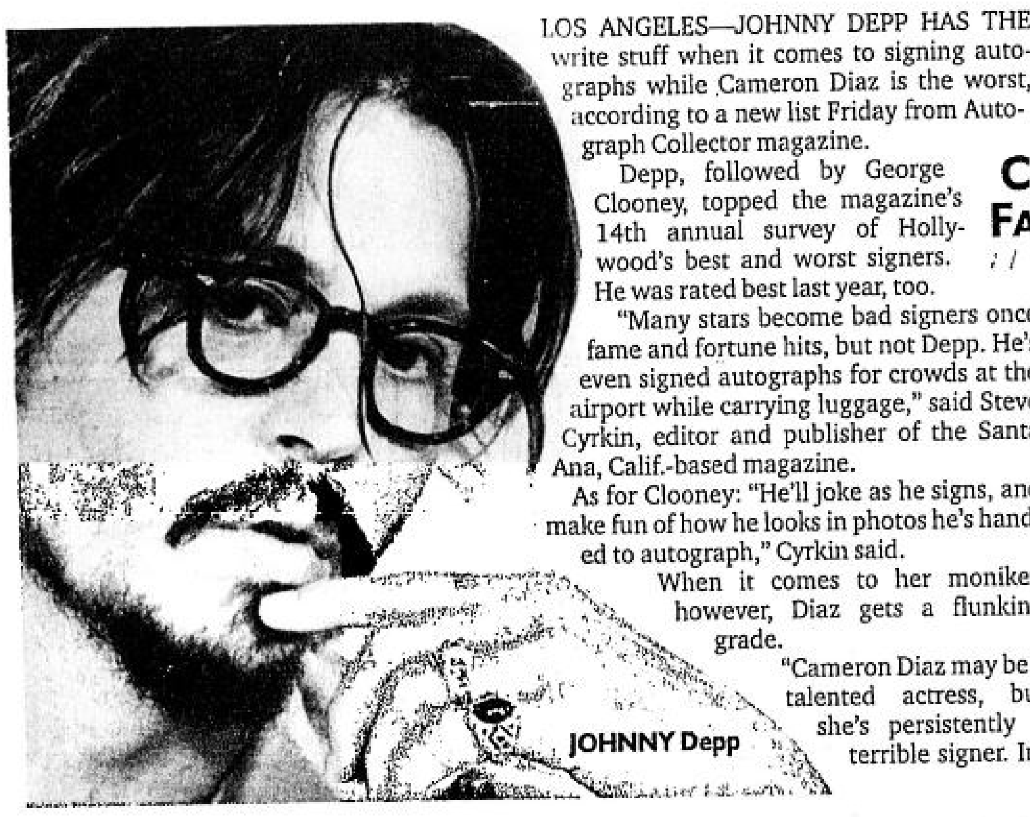
Is Nikki ready to fall in love again?

"No," she says, "but only because I'm busy

HOW NIKKI/ A2-6

NIKKI Gil says she sings better now, after her breakup with Gabriel Valenciano.

H'wood's best autograph signers



JOHNNY Depp

LOS ANGELES—JOHNNY DEPP HAS THE write stuff when it comes to signing autographs while Cameron Diaz is the worst, according to a new list Friday from Autograph Collector magazine.

Depp, followed by George Clooney, topped the magazine's 14th annual survey of Hollywood's best and worst signers. He was rated best last year, too.

"Many stars become bad signers once fame and fortune hits, but not Depp. He's even signed autographs for crowds at the airport while carrying luggage," said Steve Cyrkin, editor and publisher of the Santa Ana, Calif.-based magazine.

As for Clooney: "He'll joke as he signs, and make fun of how he looks in photos he's handed to autograph," Cyrkin said.

When it comes to her moniker, however, Diaz gets a flunking grade.

"Cameron Diaz may be a talented actress, but she's persistently a terrible signer. Instead of just turning down a person's autograph request, she'll lecture them about how dumb autographs are," Cyrkin said.

CHEER FACTOR

Russell Crowe would have been named as the best of the worst but in recent months he has been much nicer to fans, Cyrkin said in a telephone interview Friday.

Cyrkin said the list, which appears in the magazine's June issue, was based on information from a professional autograph collector and an enthusiastic ama-

H'WOOD'S/ A2-6

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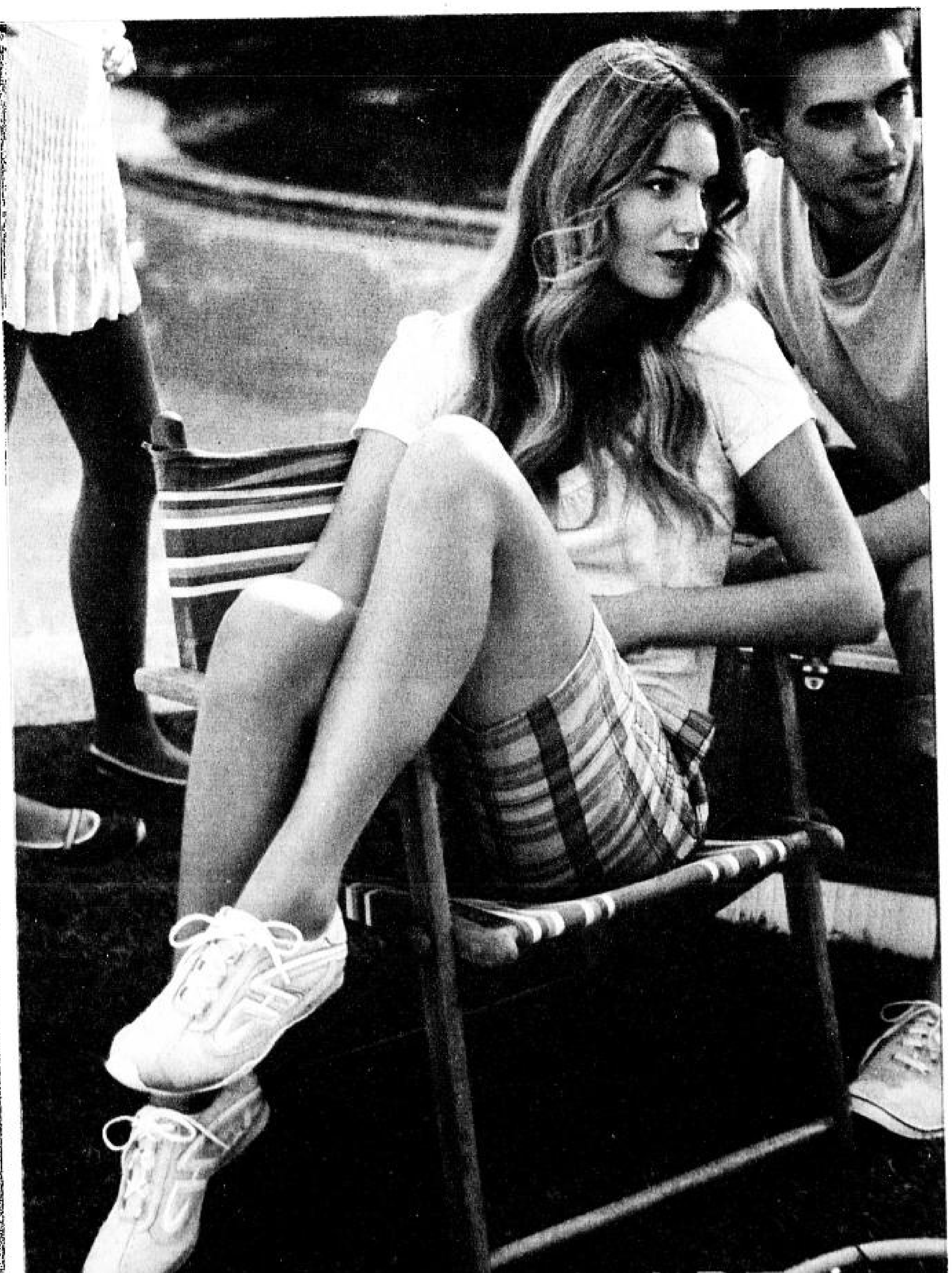

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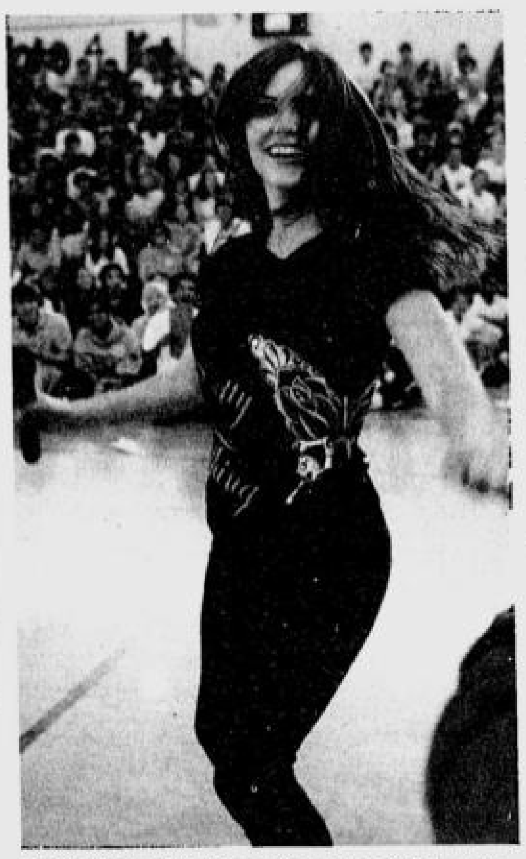
TAYLOR Hicks performs for fans at the Riverchase Galleria in Birmingham. AP



KATHARINE McPhee, 22, dances in the gym at Notre Dame High School in Los Angeles. AP

Triumph for 3

ELLIOT YAMIN, TAYLOR HICKS AND KATHArine McPhee—the top three contenders in this year's "American Idol"—are already certified superstars at this point.

In Los Angeles, California, "McPhever" mania reached a fevered pitch Friday when McPhee returned to her old high school.

Teenage boys screamed out marriage proposals. Cheerleaders chanted, "Go, Katharine, go!" Even Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa showed up at the packed gymnasium of Notre Dame High School to honor her.

The ultimate champ in Fox's mega-hit talent contest will be announced May 24.

"You make me feel like a winner, regardless of what happens," McPhee told the high-energy crowd.

The 22-year-old brunette—wearing skintight jeans, a black T-shirt and hoop earrings—raced around the gym for an hour singing snippets of songs, breaking out in dance and bear-hugging former teachers.

A sea of posters filled the room, from "Vote for Katharine—Catch the McPheever" to "She's McPhine," "She's McPheerless" and "McPhee is Our Favorite."

Footage of her visit will be shown this week on "Idol," with hometown segments featuring fellow finalists Yamin and Hicks.

McPhee, the first Los Angeles native to make it big on "Idol," seemed overwhelmed by the frenzy.

"I'm more nervous now than on the show," she said, just before launching into a soulful rendition of "God Bless the Child"—the tune she sang at her first "Idol" audition.

McPhee reflected on her past as a singing star in high school and said she missed being in musical theater productions. "I will definitely go back to that," she said.

A question from an aspiring singer prompted a bit of advice. McPhee said wannabe "Idol" contestants should pick their songs ahead of time and "remember to breathe."

Ninth-grader Amanda Dodge, 15, echoed other students in her support of McPhee.

"I think it's amazing she's here," she said. "Even though she's moving on to a whole new world, it's great to see her recognize everyone who brought her to where she is today."

Dodge dismissed controversy over this week's "Idol"—in which McPhee landed in the bottom two, but favored Chris Daughtry was voted off (see exit interview below). Some Daughtry fans have said their votes may have been mistakenly credited to another contestant.

McPhee's 23-year-old sister Adriana, another tall Notre Dame alum, said she was thrilled for her sister, adding she hoped McPhee makes the final cut. To do her part, she voted for two hours for her little sis.

"I feel guilty if I'm not voting!" she said.

Happiest day

In Richmond, Virginia, Yamin treated fans to a performance of the appropriately titled "Home," by Michael Buble.

"This is the happiest day of my life," Yamin told around 4,000 screaming fans who crowded into a downtown plaza to catch a glimpse of the 27-year-old.

Yamin was in town for a whirlwind tour that included a parade in his honor and a performance at the opening of the Richmond Braves minor league baseball game. Richmond Mayor L. Douglas Wilder presented Yamin with the key to the city.

"We know that Virginia is caught up in Elliott mania," Wilder said. "He is an ambassador for all of us, for all Virginians."

Wilder told Yamin and those who had gathered that he'd just received a fax from Idol judge Paula Abdul, in which she revealed the song she had chosen for Yamin to sing in this week's show: "What You Won't Do for Love," by Bobby Caldwell.

"I never knew how powerful a voice can be," Yamin told fans, who cheered and waved signs that read, "The Yamin Machine" and "Go, Elliot!" "To be able to sing and share it—share that voice with you all, it just means the world to me."

Yamin and his mother Claudette later visited Gov. Timothy M. Kaine, who clapped and grinned as Yamin hopped out of his stretch limo through the window and greeted the governor's staff.

"I feel like the luckiest person," Yamin said, hugging Kaine.

Inside the governor's mansion, Kaine presented Yamin with a T-shirt that read, "Virginia is for Elliott Lovers," and another to help butter up the show's most cantankerous judge: "Virginia is for Simon Lovers."

"You've really captured everybody's imagination," Kaine told Yamin.

Before American Idol, Yamin—who is 90 percent deaf in his right ear—hadn't done much public singing outside of karaoke, and a few performances with a band.

"It's just amazing," Yamin told reporters earlier Friday. "You kind of give up your anonymous lifestyle for this... but it's all totally worth it. I'm out here chasing my dream and it's just so cool to have all these people behind me."

Yamin, once considered the underdog in the competition, said he didn't initially think he'd make it to the top three.

"Starting off, you know, you get to the stadium and you see 10,000 people," he said. "You're just lucky if you get an audition. I'm just thankful that I, you know, was heard and that I had that shot and that opportunity and took advantage of it."

Dream come true

Hicks returned home to Alabama also on Friday with his own made-for-TV visit that included a parade, a visit with the governor and some down-home Southern food he just can't get while taping in Los Angeles.

"You take grits for granted," the gray-haired Hicks said during an appearance at WBRC-TV, the local Fox affiliate. Afterward, he and his bandmates played a few songs on a patio atop Red Mountain overlooking Birmingham.

Footage from Hicks' trip home will also be shown on "Idol" this week. Birmingham has already had one "Idol" winner, Ruben Studdard, and a runner-up, Bo Bice.

Hicks, who grew up in the Birmingham suburb of Hoover, Alabama, said the success of Studdard and Bice helped grease his way through auditions for the show.

"I'm doing great," said Hicks, 29. "It's a dream come true."

Autograph seekers, friends and admirers swarmed Hicks as he arrived for a long day of appearances. Left with a few seconds to himself on the TV set, Hicks silently thumbed through an old yearbook from Hoover High School, which he attended.

Hugh Mitchell, a longtime friend of Hicks' father, said the singer seems to be holding up amid the whirlwind of being on a top-rated show.

"I'm just so excited for him," said Mitchell.

Before "Idol," Hicks was the frontman for a band bearing his name. The group, which played mainly in area nightclubs, now calls itself "The Little Memphis Blues Orchestra."

Guitar player Sam Gunderson said he has not been surprised by Hicks' success on the TV show, but it's unclear what the future holds for the group.

"We'd be excited to play with Taylor at any time," said Gunderson.

ELLIOTT Yamin acknowledges a crowd of about 4,000 fans at the James Center in Richmond, Virginia. AP

Chris Daughtry isn't happy he's out, and it shows

By Kathryn Fatima Reyes

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

AMERICAN IDOL' CHRIS DAUGHtry was not happy and it showed.

Many others had been voted off before him, but he was the first to admit he was upset that he got the boot.

"It was definitely a gut-wrenching moment," Daughtry said of his elimination last week. "I was shocked... I wasn't expecting it, not even a little bit."

In this interview made possible by StarWorld, Daughtry offered what he thought was the reason that he got the lowest number of votes on results night: "I think the people got complacent... they thought I was a shoo-in and that they didn't have to vote [anymore]."

The 26-year-old rocker from McLeansville, North Carolina, also disclosed that he had tried out for the reality-TV talent search "Rockstar" last year. Obviously, that hadn't gone too well. "I didn't make it on that show because I was supposed to be on this one," he said about making it on "AI."

During the call conference with journalists from around the world, some reporters hinted on rumors about Daughtry being offered to front a rock band. He refused to discuss details, but one reporter asked, "Does the band's name start with an F?" Daughtry said yes.

The Associated Press reported the next day that the band was Fuel, whose hit song "Hemorrhage" Daughtry had sung early on in the show.

How do you feel the morning after?

I have to say I'm bummed, but I'm trying to see the bigger picture. There [must be] bigger opportunities out there and I'm going to fish for everything.

Is there a big one in particular being dangled in front of you?

There's a couple.

What happens on the show after you leave the stage? Do you get time alone in case you want to cry or something?

Yes, I got a few minutes to really just [let it sink]. I don't even think it has [already]. I'm just going to make the best of it and use this as an opportunity to launch a career.

There has been a report that a band is going to make a major announcement and potentially offer you a role in their band. Do you know anything about that? Do you know what band it would be?

Well, I've heard. But at this point, I just have to really take everything into consideration and be very careful of what I choose to do because I don't want to make a rash decision and regret it later.

We all know you as the bald rocker. Is this a fashion statement or are you just trying to prevent the recession issue from being addressed?

It's probably a little bit of both.

Did you happen to talk to any of the judges and get any kind of feedback or reaction from them afterwards?

I think everybody was pretty much speechless. Randy was pretty much saying, don't worry about it, man; you're going to be fine. Paula was crying too much to say anything. Simon was pretty shocked. He said he didn't see it coming and that he wished me the best of luck. He said he totally believes in me.

Katharine, she looked just as surprised as you when the results were announced. Did you talk after the show?

No, we didn't. I don't really know what was going through her mind. I think she... I had the inclination that she was expecting herself to go. And so she was shocked, I was shocked and I think America was shocked.

Ace Young had mentioned that you guys became very close doing "Idol." Do you feel the same? Did you talk to him after the show?

Absolutely. We became like brothers... and probably always will be. He called me last night.

Do you guys go online and read your own press?

We try not to... but I do hear it from other people.

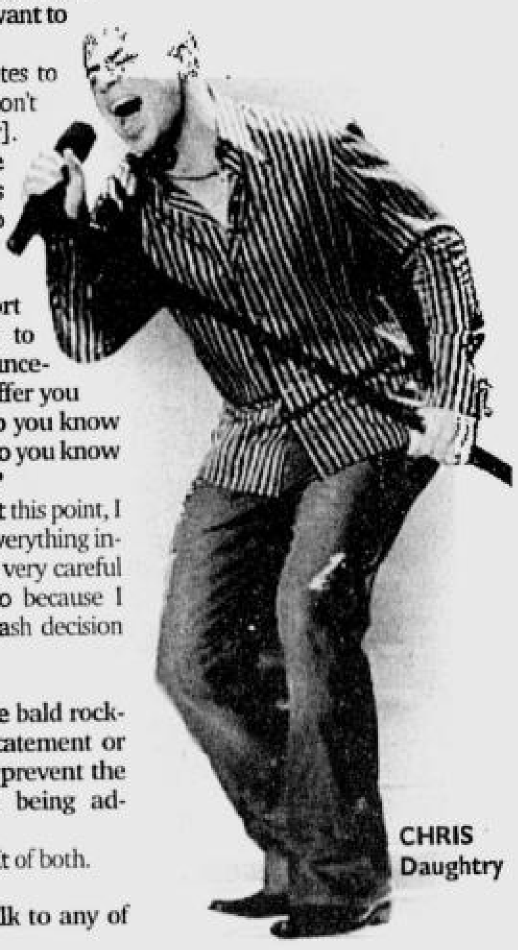
Who did you expect to go home last night?

You know what? I won't say that.

What was your wife's reaction?

I was really expecting her to be out of control and I was going to have to console her. But I think it happened the other way around. She told me how proud she was of me, and that things happen for a reason and we just have to hang on and see what that is.

("American Idol" airs on Star World Wednesdays and Thursdays at 5 p.m. direct satellite, 8 p.m. primetime and 11:30 p.m. replay.)



CHRIS Daughtry

Reality challenge for thinking viewers

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

VIEWERS WHO BEWAIL THE INANITIES that run rampant on many reality or "reality-challenge" TV shows can find relief and respite on Sundays in the new program on Star World, "The Scholar."

As the title suggests, the search this time is not for the best new starlet magician, DJ, rock band soloist, hip-hop dancer, inventor, chef, action hero, comedian or fortune teller, but for the brightest and most well-rounded high school graduate in the United States.

Brains are finally getting their share of attention on television.—What an unexpected but most welcome surprise!

We trust that viewers who love to complain that TV has become a medium for, and by, idiots will go out of their way to patronize this new reality show.

If it becomes a sleeper hit, other producers might realize that televiewers aren't as stupid as they think, and come up with other shows that don't insult our intelligence, but pay tribute to it.

The 10 contestants in "The Scholar" have been handpicked by a team of educators and are certified to be among the best young minds in the United States.

On the show's first telecast last May 7, they were put through three tests to determine their comparative strengths.

Right off the bat, the educators behind the search stated that they weren't looking for genuises, nerds and brainiacs, but for well-rounded scholars whose strengths included creativity, intellectual depth, generosity, ethics, leadership, social awareness, determination, resourcefulness, character, and a willingness to take risks.

—As we told our resident teenager at home, that's a pretty handy list of abilities that all young people who want to do well in life would do well to develop in themselves!

The contestant who did best in each week's three tests or tasks would win a prize and advance to the next round. And, the big winner at the end of the challenge would romp off with a four-year scholarship worth $250,000 to the college of his or her choice.

To a high school graduate who can't afford to go to college, that's a huge bonanza. So, all 10 handpicked contestants did their very best to stand out in the show's premiere telecast, with three of them—**Davis, Melissa** and **Jeremy**—succeeding.

At the end of the telecast, Melissa came through best of all. This was a big surprise because, in earlier scenes, she had come across as the least self-confident teen in the whole bunch.

Happily, she had triumphed over her poor self-image and proved to everyone, best of all to herself, that she could be a winner.

Success stories like that make "The Scholar" an instructive and inspiring viewing treat, so we hope that many young people get to watch the show.

We don't know if Melissa will keep on winning, but her early triumph should inspire other young people to similarly go beyond the limits they've timidly set for themselves.

Genuine scholars rock!

'Captain Tsubasa"

STARTING May 15, Animax screens "Captain Tsubasa: Road to Dream," M-F at 5:30 p.m. Tsubasa's desire to become a world-class footballer takes him to Spain, where he signs up with Catalan giants FC Catalunya. He and his friends Nyuga and Wakabayashi, have to face the challenges in some of Europe's toughest leagues, because they hope to lead Japan to glory in the next International Cup!

Backroom artists

RUFA Mae Quinto guests in the Backroom summer musical caravan, holds her first major concert on May 27 at Aliw Theater, and acts regularly on TV in "Hocus Pocus" and "Bubble Gang."

Dominic Ochoa and **Ai Ai delas Alas** play important roles in the new Channel 2 soap, "Bituing Walang Ningning," starting May 15.

And **Ariel Rivera** and **Dawn Zulueta** star in "Duyan" on "Now and Forever."

Christian audiobooks

CHRISTIAN literature has moved into the audiobook industry. The Church Strengthening Ministry brings to the Philippines popular audiobook titles from **Henry Blackaby, Rick Warren, Ken Blanchard, Zig Ziglar, Max Lucado** and **Elizabeth George**. Initial offerings include "Experiencing God," "Lead like Jesus," "A Woman After God's Own Heart," "A Man of Faith," "Leadership by Example" and "When Christ Comes." Call 512-1501 to 04.

Still crime and math in 'Numb3rs' season 2

By Joyce C. Abaño

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

AFTER A LAUDED FIRST SEASON, "Numb3rs," the series that blends the esoteric world of high-level mathematics with the more pragmatic world of crime and punishment, is back.

Season 2 starts tonight on AXN.

"After 13 episodes last season and seven into this season, we've had some evidence that viewers are still very much into the show," said Cheryl Heuton, the series' co-creator along with husband Nick Falacci. Both are accomplished screenwriters.

Sibling filmmakers Tony and Ridley Scott are the producers.

Mathematical curiosity gives "Numb3rs" a unique edge over other procedural crime dramas on television these days.

The show features David Krumholtz as Charlie Eppes, a math genius enlisted by his FBI agent brother Don, played by Rob Morrow, to help the bureau solve a wide range of challenging crimes in Los Angeles.

ROB Morrow

According to Heuton, doing the series proved to be easier than they thought.

"We anticipated going through the process and that it was going to be quite difficult," she said during a phone-patch interview. "Much to our amazement, when we started to pitch it at CBS, the executives readily embraced it. They bought the pitch less than halfway through the presentation. CBS head Nina Tasler has real steel for math and science and made everything easy."

DAVID Krumholtz

Given all the procedural crime drama series in the "CSI" mold, TV writers and producers have found it increasingly difficult to make an impression on jaded viewers.

Falacci said: "We started with the idea of wanting to do a show about a mathematician... but putting it into a crime procedural was kind of something we had to do because the market right now in US television is more open to crime shows. We felt that a mathematician is an unusual topic... the concept of math being used to solve crimes is a fresh angle."

The more they talked to mathematicians, he added, the more they found how often mathematicians have been consulted on criminal cases.

"They are also particularly consulted in statistical analysis, graphical analysis, photo enhancements," Falacci said. Math is the language of science, he said, and integrating it into every script proved quite intricate but fascinating.

"Once we found out just how many different areas and many disciplines of mathematics there are that can be applied to so many different situations like game theory and social analysis and the various different algorithms and all these different things, it just opened the doors for us to lots of different stories and actually it's gotten easier," Falacci added.

Heuton said educating viewers about math is also something that has been added for spice. "We try to teach a couple of mathematical theories in every episode... Bring some new thinking about math, some new thinking about logic."

NICK Falacci and Cheryl Heuton

According to the couple, who have several scripts under development at major studios, "Numb3rs" is their first television series.

They are happy to note that viewers "dig" it.

Heuton said: "We have a program going on now, sponsored by Texas Instruments and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, which, in the US, is the largest group of middle school and high school math teachers, They are working together to create math materials that teachers worldwide can download from the Internet and use in the classroom. These materials are based on each episode. They teach a simplified version of the math problem presented in the show. So far I think about 25,000 teachers have signed up for that."

Heuton, who studied literature at the University of California, San Diego, began her career as a newspaper writer for the Herald Examiner and proceeded to serve as executive editor at Media Week for three years. She said most of the stories on the show are based on real-life cases.

"These are stories we either know about or researched, or those that our FBI consultants have brought up. Other times we'll deal with a case that could easily have happened but we may not have an actual case that's exactly like it," she said.

The couple said they are very happy about the casting of the show, as well as with their math consultants, especially Dr. Gary Lorden, Cal Tech executive officer for the mathematics department.

"We were present at all the auditions," Heuton said. "We were particularly lucky that we got actors quite suited to the roles. I can't imagine anyone else playing Charlie than David Krumholtz. We auditioned about a hundred actors for that role. He was the guy who could do it head and shoulders above everyone else. And Rob is perfect. You know, Rob plays an FBI agent so beautifully and Charlie's brother beautifully. Judd, of course, almost looks as if he could really be their father and he's a wonderful actor. And Peter McNichols—we are so honored to work with such a fantastic actor in the character of Larry. The casting is superb. We really just got lucky there."

Heuton divulged that McNichols' character will be playing a bigger role in the current season.

"The response to Peter McNichol's character was huge," Falacci explained. "So he's been integrated more and more into the show."

But Heuton conceded that thinking up more stories to impress critical viewers had been a challenge. "As we got into the second season we really found we're getting more ideas and more character stuff. As you go forward with the characters, they develop and deepen and people are more interested in their lives and you can explain more of it."

According to the couple, "Numb3rs," which is set around Cal Tech in Los Angeles, showed it was getting through to the viewers when they heard the news that colleges and universities were starting to get more students in their math departments.

"We heard from college teachers that kids are coming to them now in bigger numbers, wanting to enroll in math more," Heuton said. "We know that at Cal Tech, the incoming freshmen who have to indicate what fields they are interested in, are now saying they want to focus on math."

Math is a logic-based language that is spoken all over the world, and Heuton and Falacci want more and more people to make use of it.

They are thinking of creating another series, but more with a drama-comedy twist. "We do like comedy," Heuton said. "We like fitting some lightness into 'Numb3rs,' and I think there's a chance we might create a comedy show."

> 'We try to teach a couple of mathematical theories in every episode... bring some new thinking about math, some new thinking about logic. We're lucky that viewers seem to dig it'

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Silver: The Songs of Vehn

SHOW TIME

FROM THE TIME THE PROJECT WAS conceived, he has insisted on only one thing: he didn't want a tribute. What he wanted was a concert that would highlight his songs, not himself.

"*Kasi kapag binigyan ka ng tribute, parang mamamatay ka na eh,*" says Vehnee Saturno.

The composer of numerous hits turned 52 last April. He is certainly a long way from kicking the bucket.

Among his famous songs are Martin Nievera's "Be My Lady," Sarah Geronimo's "Forever's Not Enough," Ella May Saison's "Till My Heartaches End," Jessa Zaragosa's "Bakit Pa" and Rachelle Ann Go's "From The Start."

Vehnee recently marked his 25th year in the business. This sparked the idea for a concert that will showcase his memorable songs.

A production of Cast&Crew, "Silver" goes onstage on May 26 at the Araneta Coliseum. Main performers are Jay-R, Rachelle Ann Go, Mark Bautista and Juris Fernandez and Chin Alcantara of MYMP.

Call 911-5555.

VEHNEE Saturno

Lani at Ayala Malls

Lani Misalucha stars in a a much-awaited "comeback" concert series at the Ayala Malls this month.

Concert dates are May 19, 5 p.m. at the Ayala Center Cebu; May 20, 6 p.m., Alabang Town Center; and May 21, 6 p.m., Glorietta.

Village People & Sister Sledge

It's retro time once again as the Village People and Sister Sledge team up for a Manila night of non-stop disco dancing and nostalgia on July 1 at the Araneta Coliseum.

With their catchy anthems—"YMCA," "Macho Man," "In The Navy"—and flamboyant outfits, The Village People became a pop icon of the disco era from the late '70s to the mid-'80s.

"We were always very positive about our energy and what we did," said Randy Jones, the group's cowboy. "We never sang about broken hearts, lost love or shattered dreams."

Sister Sledge churned out such hits as "We Are Family," "He's The Greatest Dancer," "Lost in Music," "Pretty Baby," "Mama Never Told Me," "Frankie" and versions of "Le Freak," "Everybody Dance" and "Good Times."

The group consists of sisters Debra, Joan, Kim and Kathy Sledge.

For tickets for "Retro Mania," call ALV Events International, 633-9825 to 27.

Today

Fra Lippo Lippi live in Cebu at the **Waterfront Cebu City Hotel**; 8 p.m. Tickets to the concert may only be acquired by purchasing a special My Shaldan promo pack available in Netopia Internet Café, Dunkin Donuts outlets in Cebu and the Waterfront Hotel lobby.

Tomorrow

K and The Boxers at **Zirkoh Greenhills**

May 17

MTV Live Sessions at **Café Lupe** featuring **Rivermaya**

K and The Boxers at **Klownz Araneta**

Sitti at **Tavern on the Square,** Greenbelt 3

May 18

The CompanY at **Hard Rock Café**

May 19

Barbie Almalbis at the **Araneta Coliseum** with guests **Kitchie Nadal, Rocksteddy, Ney of 6Cyclemind** and **Hannah Romawac of Session Road;** 8 p.m.

Troy Montero at **Ratsky Malate**

K and The Boxers at **Ratsky Tomas Morato**

Dave at **Suburbia**

May 20

Winston In Concert featuring **Parokya ni Edgar** and **Tarcisius** at **Cocomangas Oyster Bar** in Boracay

Kim Flores at the **La Salle Gym** in Bacolod

K and The Boxers at

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		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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G4	GLORIETTA 4	MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 11:50, 2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:30	POSEIDON	THX POSEIDON 12:45, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30, 9:45 GUARANTEED SEATS	AQUAMARINE	SILENT HILL	POSEIDON	POSEIDON
GB1	GREENBELT 1	MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	POSEIDON					
GB3	GREENBELT 3	THX MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00 GUARANTEED SEATS	THX POSEIDON 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	POSEIDON 2:20, 4:35, 6:50, 9:05, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS	POSEIDON 1:35, 3:50, 6:05, 8:20, 10:35 GUARANTEED SEATS	MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 1:15, 3:40, 6:15, 8:45, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	THX POSEIDON	MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	POSEIDON	AQUAMARINE	MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3		
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M2	MARKET! MARKET!	POSEIDON	MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	REINCARNATION	POSEIDON	MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3		

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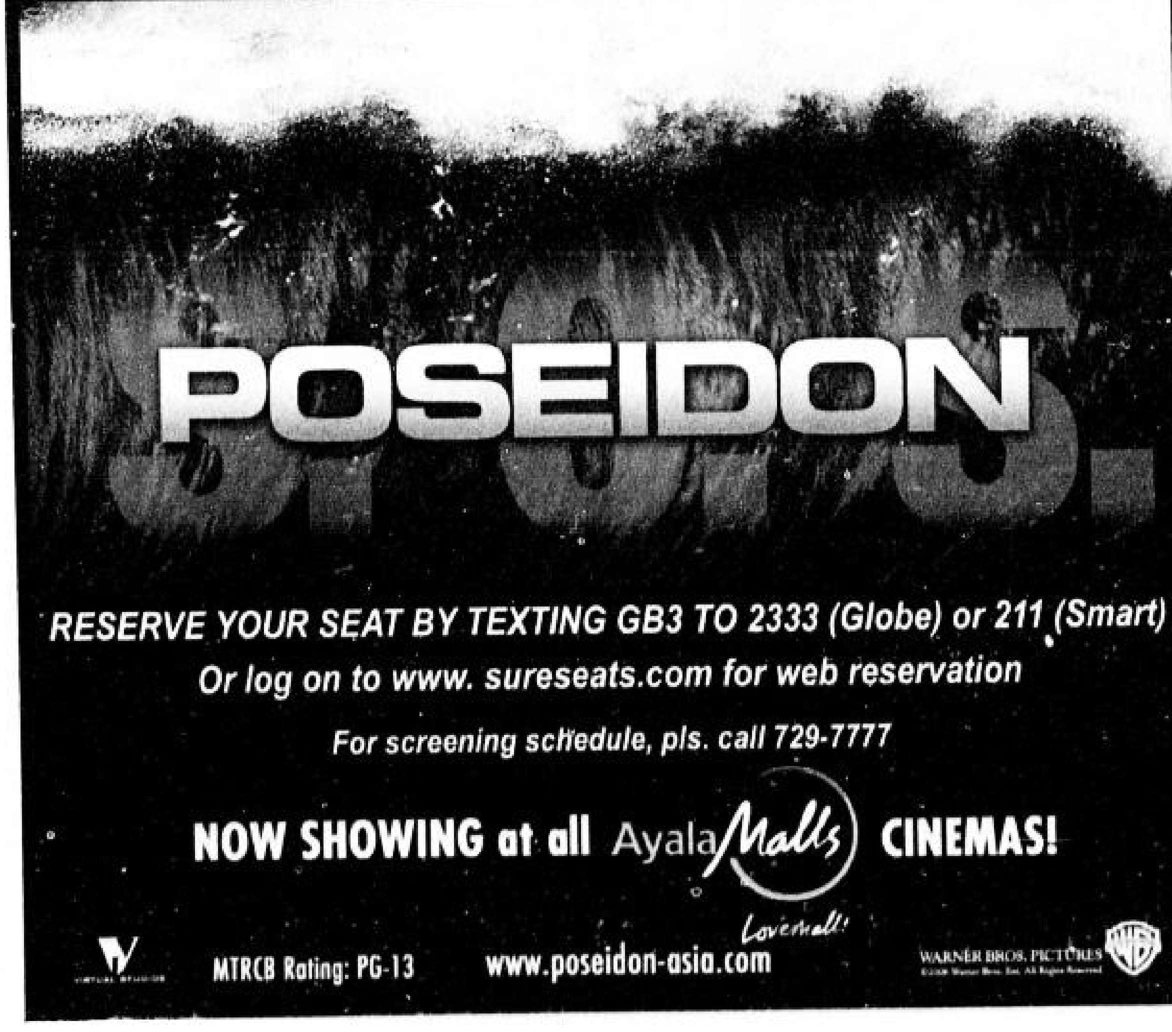

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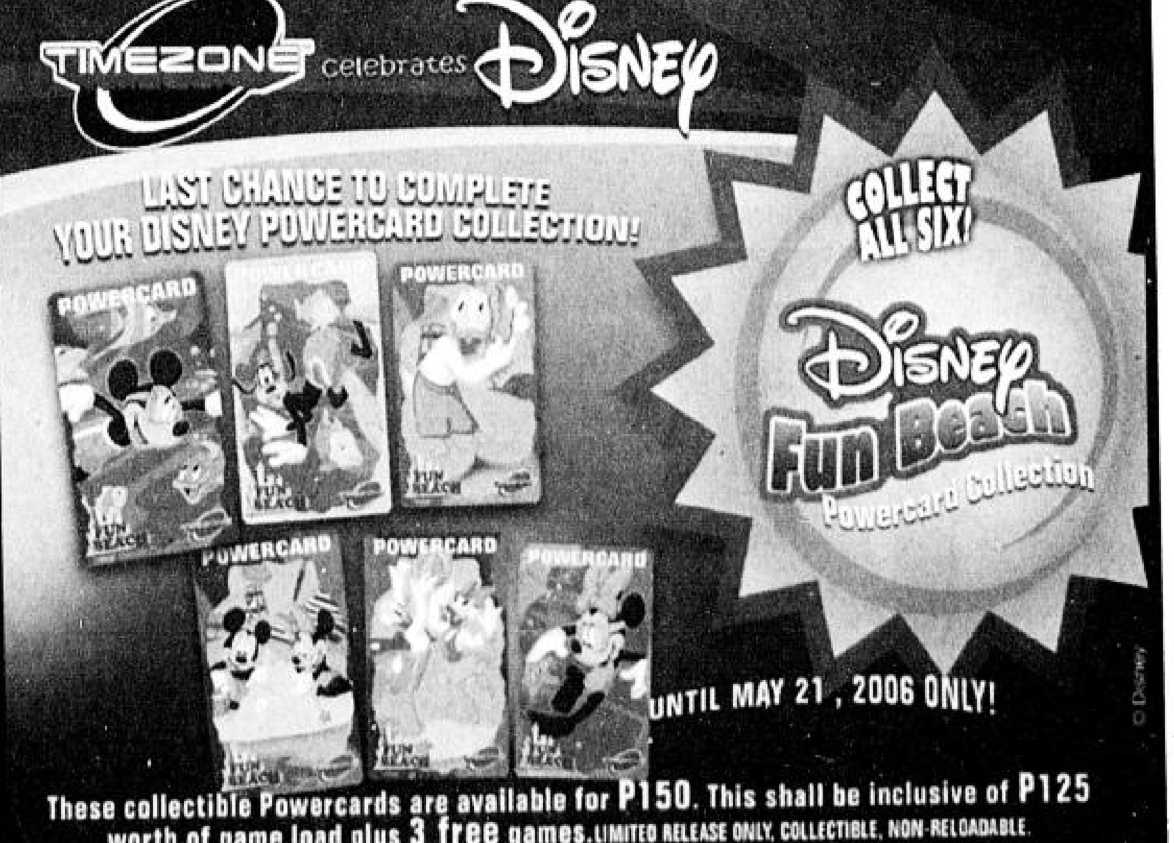

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ee Saturno

BARBIE Almalbis

LANI Misalucha

Ratsky Malate

Family Fun Game Show with Ruby Rodriguez at Metropolis Star Alabang; 4 p.m.

May 21

Ara Mina at Ratsky Morato

Join the Club at Robinson's Place Dasmariñas

May 22

Blue Jean Junkie at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

May 23

K and The Boxers at Zirkoh Greenhills

May 24

Mossimo Bikini Summit Grand Prix at the NBC Tent

K and The Boxers at Klownz Araneta

Sitti at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

May 26

Silver: The Songs of Vehnee Saturno at the Araneta Coliseum with Jay-R, Rachelle Ann Go, Mark Bautista, Juris Fernandez and guests Ella Mae Saison, The CompanY and Martin Nievera

K and The Boxers at Ratsky Tomas Morato

Hotdog with Dimsum at Suburbia Malate

May 27

Erik Mana in a live magic show at the Music Museum; 8 p.m.

Rufa Mae Quinto in her first major concert at the Aliw Theater

The CompanY at Hyatt Regency Manila's Calesa Bar

Side A at Metropolis Star Alabang

Ara Mina at Ratsky Malate

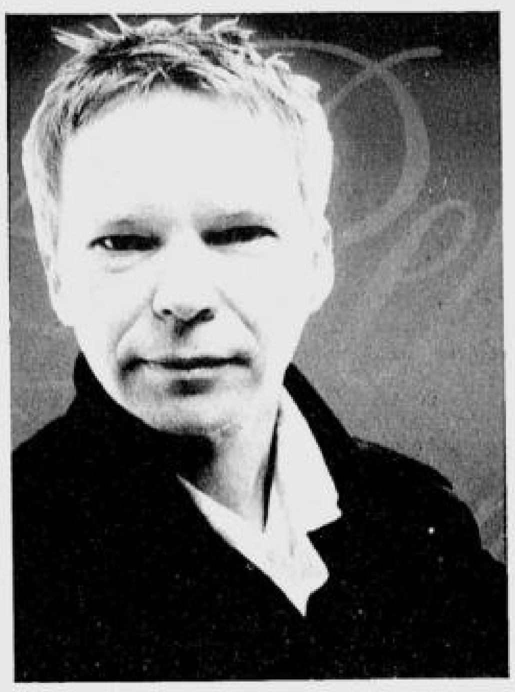
Join the Club at Robinson's Metro East

K and The Boxers at Ratsky Malate

Christian Bautista and Jennylyn Mercado at Starmall Edsa; 3 p.m.

May 30

K and The Boxers at Zirkoh Greenhills



FRA Lippo Lippi

May 31

K and The Boxers at Klownz Araneta

Sitti at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

June 3

The Four Aces in concert at the Araneta Coliseum

June 9

MTV Live Sessions at Café Lupe featuring Pupil

June 23

MTV Live Sessions at Café Lupe featuring True Faith

June 30

MTV Live Sessions at Café Lupe featuring Orange and Lemons

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*The promotional fares to these destinations are valid only for the following flights: Johannesburg & Cape Town MH203/MH204. London - MH001/MH002.

ROUNDUP

P5.2M up for grabs

THE PHILIPPINE Amusement and Gaming Corp. invites all bingo enthusiasts to join this year's Charity Bingo Fiesta and get the chance to win more than P5.2 million worth of cash prizes.

The event is set on May 21, 3 to 7 p.m., at the World Trade Center in Manila.

There will be two P1-million jackpots and thousands in consolation prizes.

Seasoned host Pepe Pimentel is the bingo master.

Call 523-3127 or 523-8691.

JOBERT Sucaldito, Amy Perez, Karen Davila and Sen. Manny Villar.

'Jobs for Life'

RADIO station DZMM's recent "Jobs for Life" fair at the Araneta Coliseum drew support from show biz celebs as well as stars of local politics. Photo shows (from Left) DZMM anchors Jobert Sucaldito and Amy Perez and broadcaster Karen Davila with Sen. Manny Villar at the fair.

MTV-Pari pact

THE PHILIPPINE Association of Record Industries and MTV Philippines have signed the partnership contract to present the 19th Awit Awards. The awarding rites are set on June 15 at the Casino Filipino theater in Parañaque City.

Pari earlier announced the winners in the nine categories:

Best Vocal Arrangement, Mon David, for "Atin Ku Pung Singsing"; Best Musical Arrangement, Gerard Salonga, "Lipad Ng Pangarap"; Best Engineered Recording, Angee Rosul, "Super Proxy"; Best Album Package, Bru and Marco Cabazal, "Tala";

Best Regional Recoding, "Hubag"; Best Christmas Recording, "Isang Taong Lumipas"; Best Novelty, "Ragarabo"; Best Dance, "Stay Real"; Best Inspirational/Religious, "Pieta (Oyayi sa Paanan ni Hesus)."

X-MEN Jean Grey and Wolverine

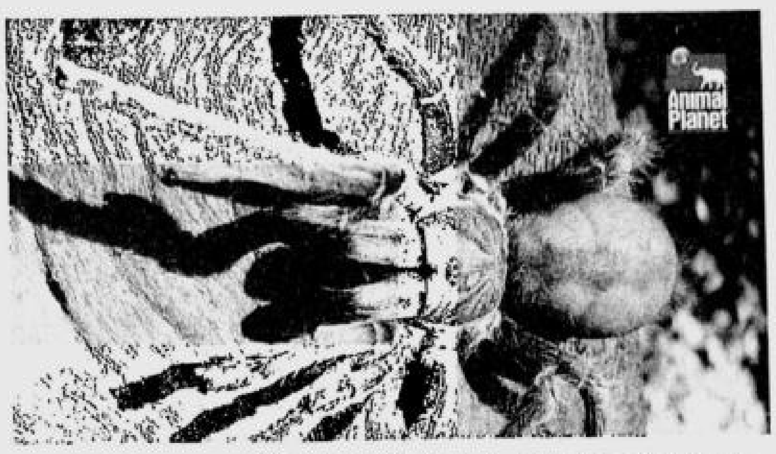
X-Men at Robinsons

ROBINSONS Galleria and Robinsons Place Manila will be home to the well-loved mutants of X-Men, as Robinsons Malls and 20th Century Fox prepare the ground for the the motion picture's final chapter, "X-Men: The Last Stand."

Shoppers can look forward to special events before the movie's advance screening on May 23 at Galleria.

Wave 89.1 conducts a Drive-By Stick-on event at the upper deck parking driveway on May 19, 3 to 7 p.m. Advance screening tickets are up for grabs.

On the same day, shoppers can join Danger Zone, 4 p.m. at the Fountain Area. Participants should accomplish a series of challenges to win special gift packs. Call 683-6137 or 683-6100 locals 780 or 782.



THE ONE-hour special "TARANTULA, Australia's King of Spiders" premieres May 28, 9 p.m., and encores May 29, 11 p.m.

And now, the news from Animal Planet

Black Bear grows up

Bred in captivity by unscrupulous backyard wildlife dealers, Charlie, a three-week old black bear, was rescued from an Internet auction by Peggy Callahan, director of Minnesota's Wildlife Science Center.

KID FIT

The Animal Planet premiere special "Growing Up Black Bear" reveals the intimate story of Charlie's first six months, as he grows from a cuddly ball of fluff into an unpredictable adolescent.

A one-hour special, the documentary premieres on May 23 at 8 p.m. and encores May 30 at 2 p.m.

"Five Owl Farm"

For three generations, Church Farm has been home to the Ritchie family—traditional farmers who are now somewhat of an endangered species. Nestled in the Vale of York, northern England, Church Farm and its surrounding landscape has witnessed great change. But the family has stuck to farming methods created by their ancestors. "Five Owl Farm" premieres May 18 at 10 p.m. and encores May 25 at 4 p.m.

185 million subscribers—human

Animal Planet reaches 185 million subscribers in 160 countries outside of the United States with programming customized in 24 languages. A joint venture between Discovery Communications and BBC World, It is the only television network on the planet dedicated to people's fascination with animals. It was launched in Asia in 1998. In Asia, it is distributed in Taiwan, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Indonesia and Vietnam.

FROM "Black Bear Grows Up."

How Nikki …

From page A2-1

'I've known Geoff Eigenmann since high school. We like to hang out together'

with work and school. I don't think I can assume the responsibilities of a girlfriend as of now."

The girl's an incoming college junior, taking up English Literature at the Ateneo. She also recently signed up with Star Magic, ABS-CBN's talent center.

There are persistent rumors pointing to "Rounin" co-star and fellow Myx veejay Geoff Eigenmann as her latest suitor.

"It's best to ask him," she tells INQUIRER Entertainment. "As far as I'm concerned, we're good friends. I've known him since high school. I'm very comfortable working and hanging out with him."

Geoff was two years ahead of Nikki at the Shekinah Christian Training Center in Parañaque, where she graduated class valedictorian.

"Even after making a name for himself in show biz, he has remained the same Geoff I know and our teachers can attest to that," Nikki says. "He's a gentleman."

CAMERON Diaz

H'wood's best …

From page A2-1

teur who is a journalist.

"They're the guys who want to get five or 10 or 12 of everything but they do see people" and know the "track records" of the stars, he said.

"It's looking at the spirit of the way they sign," Cyrkin said. "It's how they treat their fans."

Here is the list of 10 best and 10 worst Hollywood autograph signers for 2006, according to the magazine:

Best: 1) Johnny Depp, 2) George Clooney, 3) Matt Damon, 4) Al Pacino, 5) Tom Cruise, 6) Angelina Jolie, 7) Elijah Wood, 8) Brittany Murphy, 9) Jack Nicholson, 10) Clint Eastwood.

Worst: 1) Cameron Diaz, 2) Bruce Willis, 3) Demi Moore, 4) Tobey Maguire, 5) Alan Alda, 6) Halle Berry, 7) Winona Ryder, 8) Teri Hatcher, 9) Joaquin Phoenix, 10) Russell Crowe

AP

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1 SILENT HILL
2 APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR
3 M. I. - 3
4 POSEIDON

THEATRES
NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan, Telephone No. (044) 600-3025
1 POSEIDON
3 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
3 BANDIDAS

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5771
M. I. - 3
POSEIDON
RESERVED
RESERVED

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 (DDS) POSEIDON
2 (SDDS) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE-3
3 (DTS) THE WILD
4 GOLD (DTS) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE-3
5 GOLD (DOLBY) POSEIDON
6 GOLD (SDDS) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE-3
7 GOLD (DOLBY) POSEIDON
8 (DOLBY STEREO) SILENT HILL
9 (DOLBY STEREO) SENTINEL
10 (DOLBY STEREO) REINCARNATION

Blue Wave MARQUINTON
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 (DOLBY) AQUAMARINE
2 (DOLBY) APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR
3 (DOLBY) POSEIDON
4 (DOLBY) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE-3

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228
1 (DOLBY) M. I. - 3
2 POSEIDON
3 APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR
4 REINCARNATION
5 SLITHER

MARKET!MARKET! Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 SLITHER
2 APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR
3 BANDIDAS
4 RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA 2000
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 POSEIDON
2 M. I. - 3
3 APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 M. I. - 3
2 POSEIDON

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY EX) M. I. - 3
2 POSEIDON
3 (DTS (?)) SILENT HILL
4 APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 TRISTAN & ISOLDE

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) POSEIDON
2 (DOLBY) M. I. - 3
3 (DOLBY) POSEIDON
4 (DOLBY) M. I. - 3

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 FINAL DESTINATION
2 (DTS) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE-3
3 (DOLBY) POSEIDON
4 DUNGEON & DRAGON

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall (Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 DUNGEON & DRAGON
2 (DOLBY) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE-3
3 (DTS) POSEIDON
4 CRY WOLF

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix (Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 M. I. - 3
2 ICE AGE-2
3 (DOLBY) WHEN A STRANGER CALLS

Cinema 2000 Metrotown (Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 BANDIDAS
2 NANNY MCPHEE
3 (DOLBY) THE WILD
4 (DTS) POSEIDON

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 POSEIDON
2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE-3
3 (DOLBY) THE WILD

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Gapan)
1 POSEIDON
2 EIGHT BELOW

Lianas Cinema (Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 APOY SA DIBDIB
2 WHEN A STRANGER CALL

Lianas Cinema (Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) BOOGEYMAN
2 HIRAM
3 APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR
4 (DTS) TAKE MY BODDY

Lianas MovieCity (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) MISSION IMPOSIBLE-3
2 GISING NA SI ADAN
3 (DTS) POSEIDON
4 SHE'S THE MAN
5 FINAL DESTINATION

Fiesta World Mall (Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 TUKSO
2 POSEIDON
3 SLITHER
4 M. I. - 3

Berma Cinema (Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 MISSION IMPOSIBLE-3
2 APOY SA DIBDIB

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1 POSEIDON 12:10, 2:35, 5:00, 7:25, 9:50 PG-13
2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 1:35, 4:30, 7:25, 10:30 PG-13
3 POSEIDON 12:50, 3:15, 5:40, 8:05, 10:30 PG-13
4 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 9:10 PG-13
For inquiries, call: 687-6963
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Rockwell Center, Makati City
Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
POSEIDON PG13 2:25,4:45,7:05,9:25
POSEIDON PG13 1:40,4:00,6:20,8:40
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 PG13 12:45,3:30,6:15,9:00
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 PG13 1:45,4:30,7:15,10:00
AQUAMARINE G 2:20,4:40,7:00,9:20
POSEIDON PG13 12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50,10:10

FEEDBACK

Explain, please

From Ruben Macasinag (applegreen100256@yahoo.com) Western Mindanao State University, Zamboanga City:

Most "Pinoy Big Brother" viewers here in Zamboanga City were shocked when Nifia was ousted despite having gotten the highest percentage of viewers votes.

We smell something fishy. Either the result was manipulated, or there were lapses during the counting of votes. Viewers exert effort and spend time and money to participate in the show, so the management of ABS-CBN owes us an explanation.

Not Groban's

From Alpha Donna Susbilla (adss_1011@yahoo.com) Meycauyan, Bulacan:

Nini Valera mentioned in her article that Harry Santos sang "Fly Me Up" by Josh Groban. I watched the "Pinoy Pop Superstar" grand finals and Harry Santos sang "To Where You Are" by Josh Groban. As a Josh Groban fan, neither have I encountered any song of such title in any of his albums. Thanks and more power.

Why, oh why?

From Ricci Santiago (signorelli@coolcare.com) Dammam, KSA:

Filipinos would love "Da Vinci Code" because it is a great movie. Why do we even think of banning such a movie whose sole purpose is to entertain?

If religion is the main reason, the church would be blamed more if they ban it—just like what happened in the case of "The Last Temptation of Christ" and "The Priest."

I believe movies like these spur more imagination and encourage Filipinos to search for the truth, not just accept the way things are today.

C'mon, we have a daily dose of bad programs on television everyday, like entertainment talk shows and the 6 o'clock news.

I love 'Idol'

From Georgeanna Meyer (georgiegirl1941 @yahoo.com) 296 Royal Palm Way, USA:

I just love "American Idol." I have a planned vacation coming up and I do not want to miss the last show, so whatever it takes, I will work my vacation around the show. What is the date for the final show of the season? Thanks.

(The final show is on May 24 in the US, which is May 25 in the Philippines.)

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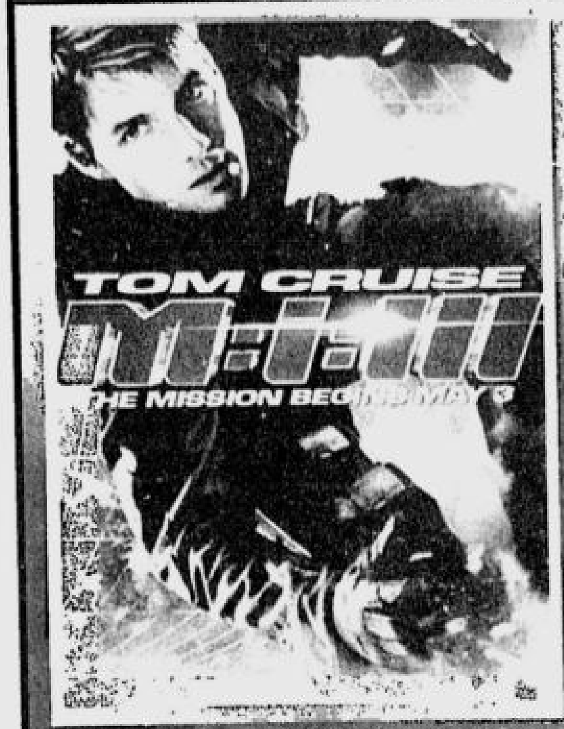

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CINEMA 1
POSEIDON
CINEMA 2
M:I:III

SM MEGACINEMA
POSEIDON
SENTINEL
M:I:III
POSEIDON
AQUAMARINE
REINCARNATION
WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
D LUCKY ONES
SILENT HILL
M:I:III
THE WILD
APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR

SM NORTH EDSA
POSEIDON
SILENT HILL
REINCARNATION
M:I:III
APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR
AQUAMARINE
POSEIDON
M:I:III

SM CITY DASMARINAS
M:I:III
CHINESE TALL STORY
APOYSA DIBDIB NGSAMAR
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AQUAMARINE
ICE AGE 2
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M:I:III
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SM CITY STA. MESA
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M:I:III
M:I:III
SILENT HILL
REINCARNATION
D LUCKY ONES
AQUAMARINE
SENTINEL
APOYSA DIBDIB NGSAMAR
PAMAHIIN

SM CITY BICUTAN
POSEIDON
M:I:III
SILENT HILL
POSEIDON

SM CITY SAN LAZARO
M:I:III
M:I:III
POSEIDON
SILENT HILL
THE WILD
D LUCKY ONES

SM CITY MANILA
M:I:III
AQUAMARINE
REINCARNATION
POSEIDON
THE WILD
POSEIDON
WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
M:I:III
SILENT HILL
EIGHT BELOW
D LUCKY ONES
PAMAHIIN

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
M:I:III
POSEIDON
M:I:III
POSEIDON
SILENT HILL
PAMAHIIN
AQUAMARINE
REINCARNATION
D LUCKY ONES

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA
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SM CITY SUCAT
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POSEIDON
M:I:III
POSEIDON

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LUZON

SM CITY BAGUIO
POSEIDON
BANDIDAS
M:I:III
M:I:III

SM CITY MARILAO
POSEIDON
M:I:III
TRISTAN & ISLODE
SUBMERGED

SM CITY BACOOR
PAMAHIIN
M:I:III
POSEIDON
SILENT HILL
M:I:III
POSEIDON
D LUCKY ONES
AQUAMARINE

SM CITY BATANGAS
SHAGGY DOG
POSEIDON
M:I:III
SHE'S THE MAN

SM CITY LUCENA
THE WILD
M:I:III
NORTH COUNTRY
POSEIDON

SM CITY CLARK NOW OPEN
POSEIDON
THE WILD
M:I:III
SILENT HILL
APOYSA DIBDIB NGSAMAR
MAGING AKIN MULI

SM CITY PAMPANGA
POSEIDON
M:I:III
SILENT HILL
PAMAHIIN
APOY,SA DIBDIB NGSAMAR
SUBMERGED

SM CITY MOLINO
M:I:III
POSEIDON
SILENT HILL
GRANDMA'S BOY

SM CITY STA. [illegible]
SHE'S THE MAN
WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
POSEIDON
M:I:III

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
M:I:III
POSEIDON
SUBMERGED
SENTINEL
D LUCKY ONES
THE DARK
M:I:III
POSEIDON

SM CITY ILOILO
D LUCKY ONES
RESERVED
POSEIDON
M:I:III
POSEIDON
SILENT HILL
RESERVED
APOYSA DIBDIB NGSAMAR

SM CITY [illegible]
POSEIDON
SHE'S THE MAN
D LUCKY ONES
THE WILD
POSEIDON
M:I:III

SM CITY [illegible]
POSEIDON
THE WILD
PAMAHIIN
M:I:III

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FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING MTRCB RATING SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

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GALLERIA 632-9116

1 POSEIDON • THX
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
11:00 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00

3 REINCARNATION
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

4 POSEIDON
11:40 2:00 4:20 6:40 9:00

5 POSEIDON
12:10 2:30 4:50 7:10 9:30

6 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

7 AQUAMARINE
12:10 2:35 5:00 7:25 9:50

8 SILENT HILL
2:00 4:40 7:20

9 APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

10 SLITHER
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 POSEIDON
11:00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 10:00

2 SLITHER
12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00

3 SILENT HILL
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 9:50

4 APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

5 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

6 REINCARNATION
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

7 POSEIDON
12:00 2:10 4:20 6:40 9:00

METRO EAST 682-8193 / 682-8199

1 SLITHER
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
11:20 1:50 4:20 6:50 9:15

3 SUBMERGED
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

4 AQUAMARINE
11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05

5 SILENT HILL
1:30 4:30 6:10 9:00

6 POSEIDON
12:10 2:10 4:10 6:10 8:10

7 POSEIDON
11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:10

8 REINCARNATION
1:20 3:40 6:00 8:20

NOVALICHES [illegible]

1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 POSEIDON
3 SILENT HILL
4 APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR
5 POSEIDON
6 SLITHER

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-257[illegible]

1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 POSEIDON
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5378

1 POSEIDON
2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
3 REINCARNATION
4 SILENT HILL

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1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 SHE'S THE MAN
3 APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR
4 POSEIDON

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1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 POSEIDON
3 MURDER
4 SLITHER
5 TIGER BLADE

DASMARIÑAS [illegible]

1 POSEIDON
2 SUBMERGED
3 FINAL DESTINATION 3
4 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3

ANGELES (045) 892-2348

1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR
3 SILENT HILL
4 POSEIDON

IMUS [illegible]

1 BANDIDAS
2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
3 POSEIDON
4 SUBMERGED

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-5270

1 SILENT HILL
2 APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR
3 SUBMERGED
4 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
5 POSEIDON
6 POSEIDON

BACOLOD [illegible]

1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 THE WILD
3 POSEIDON
4 SLITHER
5 GRANDMA'S BOY
6 THE LAST HOLIDAY

ILOILO [illegible]

1 POSEIDON
2 SLITHER
3 SILENT HILL
4 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
5 APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR
6 THE LAST HOLIDAY

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RUSHES

JOYCE Bernal with Lucky and Anne

Direk's desire

DIRECTOR JOYCE BERNAL, WHO HAS HER own screen monicker (with a Bb. before her name) says she has to "fall in love" with her movies' leading men in order to do a good job. Actually, the saucy Tagalog word she used could be loosely translated to "desire" or "covet." Her "passion" for Piolo Pascual produced the box-office winner "Don't Give Up On Us." Unfortunately for Luis Manzano, star of the Binibini's latest flick, "All About Love," she has "zero malice" for him. Could it be Ate Vi?

New jokes from our Inbox

Supposed Top 8 quotes from Melanie Marquez:

1) I couldn't care a damn!

2) What's your next class before this?

3) Can you repeat that for the second time once more, from the top?

4) Hello? My brother Joey is out of town... would you like to wait?

5) Don't touch me not!

6) Hello? For a while... please hang yourself.

7) You! You're not a boy anymore. You are a man anymore.

8) Come, let's join us.

Rating 'Da Vinci'

According to Columbia Pictures, "The Da Vinci Code" was classified "Appropriate for Children" in certain countries that have large Roman Catholic populations—Poland (89.8 percent), France (88 percent), Belgium (75 percent) and Slovakia (68.9 percent). How about the Philippines?

'Rounin' in the running

GWEN Garci

The new ABS-CBN fantaserye "Rounin" requires several teen stars to undergo extensive martial arts training, among them Joross Gamboa, Geoff Eigenmann, Angelica Panganiban and Nikki Gil.

Nikki took arnis lessons in preparation for her role as Lial, a "goody-goody goddess" with "electrifying" powers. We can't wait!

Second choice

Speaking of Nikki. Did you know that she was the second choice in the soft drink commercial that had made her famous? The other girl shall remain nameless.

Horsing around

Anne Curtis makes a beautiful *kutsero* in her new movie "All About Love." She took "*calesa*-driving" lessons at the Quezon City Memorial Circle with a horse named "Lucky," after her leading man Luis Manzano.

How-to video

Believe it or not, the press release starts this way: "Give your man a knockout performance! Sway, slide and seduce with 'Striptease.'"

MARIEL Rodriguez

In the next paragraph: "Let Gwen (Garci) be your guide while slowly mastering the art of undress."

This is about a how-to video that also features Gwen's fellow Hot Babes Myles Hernandez and Zarra Lopez.

Whew.

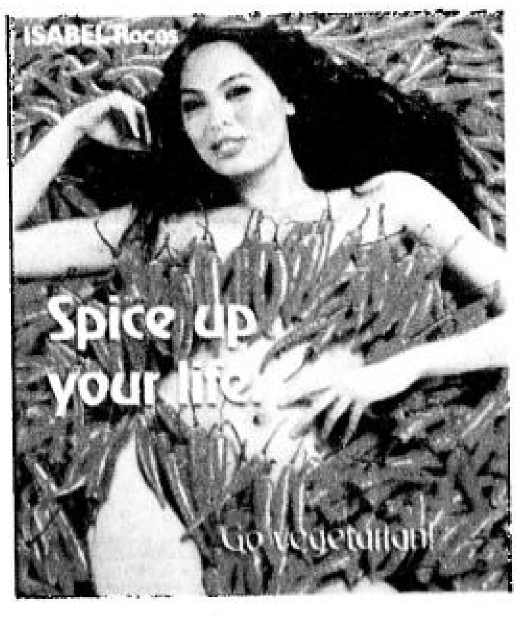
Her very own

Mariel Rodriguez on stepping into the shoes of Toni Gonzaga as host of "Pinoy Big Brother Primetime Edition": "My manager Tito Boy [Abunda] told me to attack it my way, not Toni's way."

And Bianca Gonzalez on being the "PBB" Updates and Uplate girl: "Hopefully, with my insights [as a former housemate], I can help viewers relate to the present [teen] group." Viewers do need such an intervention with the current batch.

Spicy vegan

Covered in red hot chillies, Filipino supermodel Isabel Roces appears in a brand-new ad for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, shot in Thailand by ace fotog Amat Nimitpark. Isabel's message: "Spare the animals, clear your conscience. Go vegetarian."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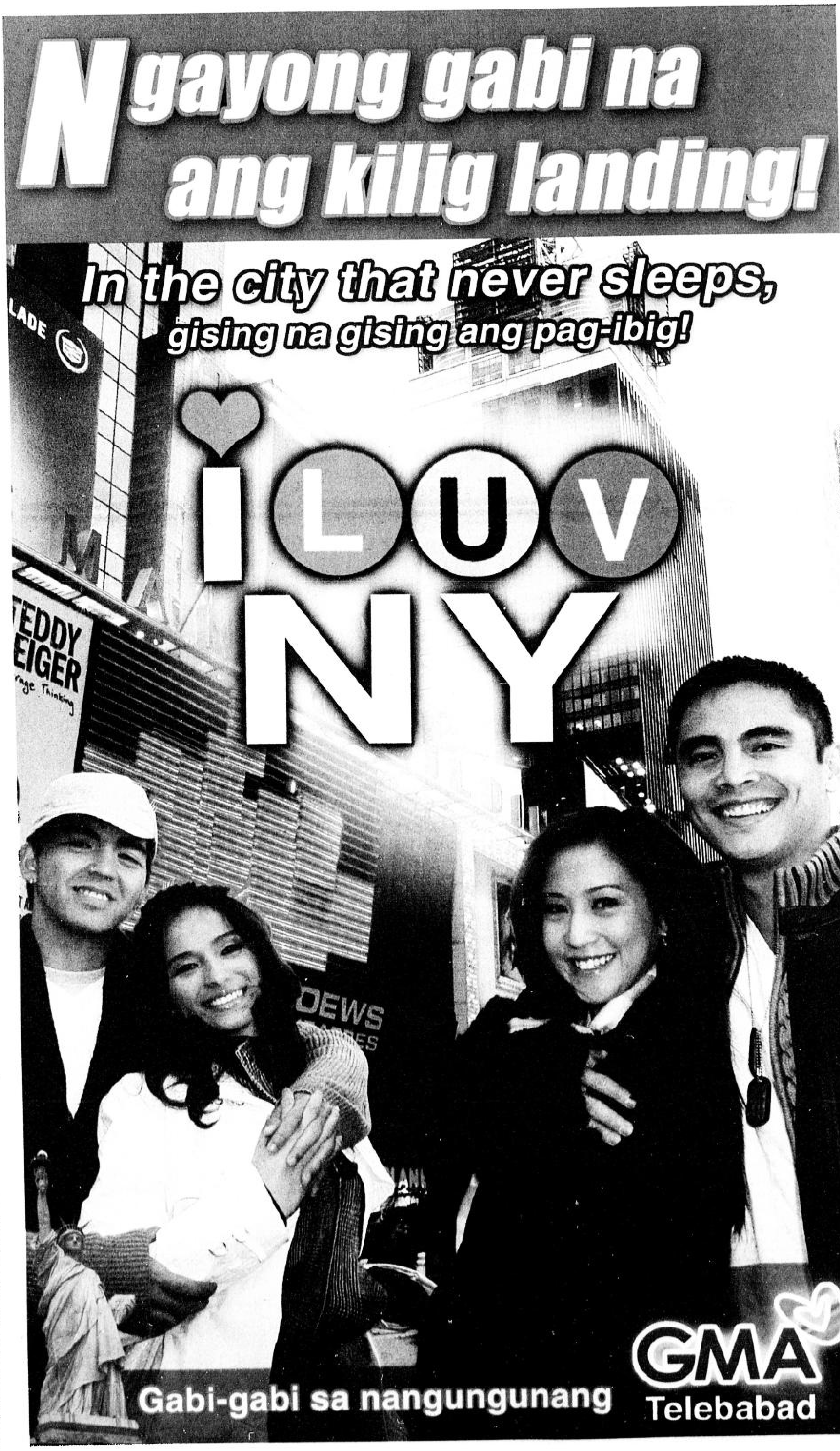
IN THEATERS MAY 19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OFW remittances hit 8-year high

March record brings 1st quarter inflows to $2.8B

By Doris C. Dumlao

DOLLARS AND OTHER FOREIGN CURRENCIES SENT BY overseas Filipino workers through the banking system surged to an eight-year high of $1.03 billion in March, 15.6 percent better than the inflows a year ago, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said.

The sustained double-digit growth brought the total OFW remittances for the first quarter to $2.8 billion, or 14.6 percent higher than in the same period last year.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the OFW inflows in March marked the highest level seen since the $1.07 billion in remittances in January 1998.

The Asian currency turmoil in 1997, despite the drag on debt-ridden corporations, actually favored many OFW-assisted households as the sharp peso devaluation allowed them to generate more pesos out of the dollars sent from abroad.

The inflows for March alone stood 19.2 percent better than the $865.79 million in remittances recorded in February.

Tetangco attributed the higher level of OFW inflows to the growing number of workers deployed abroad as well as enhanced banking services by commercial banks.

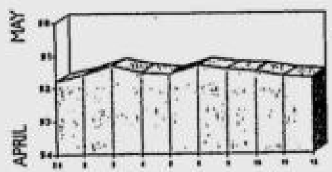
Based on recent government surveys, the amount of OFW remittances slipping past formal banking channels has gone down due to efforts of Philippine banks to capture more cash transfer business. The so-called leakage refers to funds sent through unlicensed or unregulated operations such as friends, acquaintances or other travelers.

"Commercial banks, through the introduction of enhanced modes of remittance transfers such as Internet and online banking, promotional campaigns such as giveaways and better rates, establishment of additional remittance centers in host countries and strengthened tie-ups with foreign money transfer agents, were able to provide banking services to a wider number of over-

OFW/B13

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



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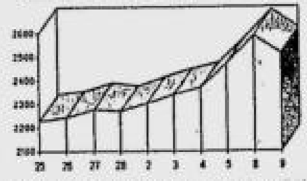
As of 5 p.m., May 12, 2006

¥109.81 = $1
As of 5 p.m., May 12, 2006

GOLD: $722.10-722.60
per ounce Hong Kong, May 12, 2006



(See stock market report on Page B6)

Profit-taking seen to continue

POSITIVE ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND FAVORABLE first-quarter income reports may continue to boost investor interest in stocks in the long term.

PROFIT-TAKING/ B3

Bill seeks to grant tax perks only to exporters

By Michelle V. Remo

IN A BID TO DRASTICALLY CUT foregone revenues for the government, the Senate is set to prepare a bill that will remove all fiscal incentives granted to businesses, except those enjoyed by exporters.

And believing the proposed bill was a prudent way to shore up the government's anemic revenues and trim down the budget deficit, the Department of Finance said it would throw its support for the bill's immediate passage into law.

The Senate committee on ways and means, headed by Sen. Ralph Recto, informed the DOF of its proposed bill after a DOF-commissioned study showed that 83 percent of the tax- and duty-free privileges granted by the Board of Investments to registered firms were redundant.

"Redundant" means that even without the fiscal incentives, the businesses, many of which are foreign-based, would still have invested in the country anyway.

Estimates by the DOF showed that the government lost P282.8 billion in potential revenues in 2004 due to the granting of fiscal incentives. The amount was 151 percent of the national government's budget deficit for that year.

"Granting incentives only to exporters and requiring all others to pay taxes would simplify things and improve revenues," said Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran. He added that businesses were enticed to invest in a

BILL/B13

WHAT'S INSIDE

SMC accounting seizures /B3
Court OKs rehab of Platinum Plans /B6

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Gov't to shell out $4.1B to repay foreign debts this year

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT WILL SPEND about $4.1 billion in foreign debt servicing this year, slightly lower than the $4.43 billion shelled out last year due to falling debt stock and bond yields, documents from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed.

For 2007, the cost of external debt servicing is seen to further decline to $3.78 billion. Aside from narrowing interest rate differentials here and abroad, the planned reduction in fresh foreign borrowings and shift to more local sources are expected to temper debt servicing requirements.

Debt servicing is the government's biggest expenditure item accounting for about a third of its budget.

Asked to explain the government's easing debt servicing requirements, a government source said: "It's a combination of a declining debt stock and declining premiums or interest rate on debts."

"We are also paying off the expensive debts borrowed during the years when premiums were high. We are now refocusing on ODAs (official development assistance), which carry preferential rates—such as 40 basis points over US treasuries for World Bank loans, for instance," the source added.

Of the government's $4.1 billion in direct external debt servicing requirements for this year, $2.13 billion represent principal repayments and $2.02 billion will be interest payments.

As of end-2005, the Philippines had $19.15 billion in outstanding foreign currency bonds but in the early part of this year, it incurred an additional $2.1 billion worth of direct external debts.

Of the total foreign bond float, the bulk consisted of global bonds and eurobonds amounting to $16.3 billion and $1.3 billion, respectively. The bond float also included $774 million in remaining Brady bonds, $411 million or 53 percent of which would be retired by June this year.

The projected debt servicing requirements excluded debts relent to government-owned and -controlled corporations and other public sector entities or those guaranteed by the government.

The country's foreign debt stock registered with the BSP, mostly consisting of national government and other public sector borrowings, stood at $54.2 billion in 2005, or equivalent to about half of the country's total economic output.

A slowdown in the debt servicing requirements contributes to the country's balance-of-payment surplus and eases pressure on the peso exchange rate against the US dollar.

The BSP expects its balance of payment by year's end to have a surplus of about $1.6 billion, smaller than last year's $2.4 billion.

The BOP measures the foreign exchange transactions between the domestic economy and the rest of the world. Its major components are the current account and the capital and financial account.

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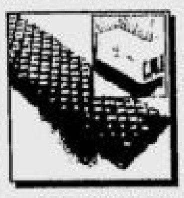

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Philippine National Bank

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of the Philippine National Bank will be held on May 30, 2006 at 8:00 a.m. at the Ballroom, Upper Lobby, Century Park Hotel, 599 Pablo Ocampo Sr. St., Malate, Manila.

The Agenda for the meeting is as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Secretary's Proof of Notice and Quorum
3. Approval of the Minutes of the 2005 Annual Stockholders' Meeting held on May 24, 2005
4. Report of the President on the Results of Operations for the Year 2005
5. Approval of the 2005 Annual Report
6. Approval of the Amendment to the Amended By-Laws (transfer of the position, powers and duties of the Chairman of the Board in Sections 6.1 and 6.3, Article VI captioned "Officers" to Section 5.4, Article V captioned "Board of Directors")
7. Ratification of All Acts, Resolutions and Proceedings of the Board of Directors and Corporate Officers since the 2005 Annual Stockholders' Meeting
8. Election of Directors
9. Appointment of External Auditor
10. Other Matters
11. Adjournment

Minutes of the 2005 Annual Stockholders' Meeting as well as resolutions of the Board of Directors from May 25, 2005 will be available for examination during office hours at the Office of the Corporate Secretary.

Only stockholders of record as of May 2, 2006 will be entitled to notice and vote at this meeting. Registration will begin at 6:00 a.m.

If you cannot personally attend the meeting, you may designate your authorized representative by submitting a PROXY to the Office of the Corporate Secretary not later than 5:00 p.m. on May 25, 2006. Any proxies so received will be validated on May 26, 2006, 9:30 a.m., at the Office of the Stock Transfer Agent at Allied Bank Center, 6754 Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

Pasay City, March 24, 2006

RENATO J. FERNANDEZ
Corporate Secretary

Republic of the Philippines
Securities and Exchange Commission
Metro Manila

IN THE MATTER OF:
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Registrant.

Registration of Securities

x--x

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that on May 2, 2006, a sworn statement was filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission for and on behalf of Ayala Corporation for the registration of P3,000,000,000.00 worth of Preferred Class "B" shares with the par value and issue value of P100.00 per share representing 30,000,000 of such shares. Ayala Corporation indicated that it is reserving the right to increase the offer size in the event of oversubscription, subject to the Commission's requirements.

According to the papers presented, the following persons are the officers/directors of Ayala Corporation:

Board of Directors (as of April 7, 2006):

Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II
Fernando Zobel de Ayala
Aristón Estrada, Jr.
Meneleo J. Carlos Jr.
Xavier P. Loinaz
Mercedita S. Nolledo
Masakazu Okabayashi

Executive Officers (as of April 7, 2006):

Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II	Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Fernando Zobel de Ayala	President and Chief Operating Officer
Aristón Estrada, Jr.	Adviser to the Chairman
Mercedita S. Nolledo	Senior Managing Director and Corporate Secretary
Gerardo C. Ablaza, Jr.	Senior Managing Director
Delfin L. Lazaro	Chief Finance Officer
Antonino T. Aquino	Managing Director
Jaime I. Ayala	Managing Director
Charles C. Cosgrove	Managing Director
Aurelio R. Montinola III	Member, Management Committee
Arthur R. Tan	Managing Director
Rufino Luis T. Manotok	Managing Director and Corporate Information Officer
Renato O. Marzan	Managing Director, Assistant Corporate Secretary and Compliance Officer
Ramon G. Opulencia	Managing Director and Treasurer
John Philip S. Orbeta	Managing Director

The Registration Statement, as well as the papers attached thereto are available for inspection during business hours at the Securities and Exchange Commission, EDSA, Mandaluyong. Copies of the Registration Statement will be furnished to interested parties at such reasonable charge as the Commission may prescribe.

(ORIGINAL SIGNED)
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Director, Securities and Exchange Commission

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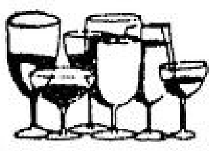

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

AN UNSIGNED WHITE paper alleging inflated sales of a San Miguel subsidiary not only caused the cancellation of SMC's $300-million bond issuance but the replacement of its external auditor SGV, according to official and industry sources.

SGV had just completed and signed the 2005 audit of the region's biggest food and beverage company in March when an anonymous letter surfaced, claiming that SMC subsidiary Philippine Beverage Partners Inc., which bottles water and tea as well as ready-to-drink and powdered fruit juices, had been overstating its sales.

To clear itself of laxity and, worse, complicity, SGV volunteered to conduct another examination.

But the SMC board instead decided to terminate—"rotate" is the preferred word—its auditor of nine years and award the prestige account to Laya Mananghaya, which had done external auditing work for the private companies of SMC chair and CEO Eduardo Cojuangco Jr.

To deflect any whitewash allegations, no less than SMC director and SSS president Corazon de la Paz, who herself headed the Joaquin Cunanan accounting firm before joining the government, has been assigned to oversee the PhilBev audit review.

According to the grapevine, SMC, particularly its president, Ramon Ang, is extra sensitive to the cooking-the-books allegation since he and Roberto Huang, the president of Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines, the SMC subsidiary that in turn owns PhilBev, were earlier dragged into the so-called "mansions for Erap mistresses" issue that contributed to the ouster of President Estrada.

Huang and Ang were the key shareholders of a construction company that owned the 3,000-square-meter South Forbes property on Molave and Banaba streets, whose alleged beneficial owner—a claim vigorously denied by Ang—was said to be Joseph Estrada's mistress Guia Gomez and/or her son, San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito.

Even during those tumultuous Edsa II months, various unsigned white papers were floating around, also alleging the overstatement of San Miguel Beer sales, then also headed by Huang.

The new claim of overstatement ironically comes in the wake of plummeting sales of Coca-Cola Bottlers's Coke and other carbonated drinks.

For 2005, the Coca-Cola Beverage Group reported an 8-percent drop in sales volume and an even worse 63-percent year-on-year decline in operating income, even as PhilBev diversified into the booming green tea and health drink lines.

Pfizer's fissures

THE UNORTHODOX legal tactic of Pfizer in suing even in their personal capacities the two top officials of the Bureau of Food and Drugs has washed up all the way in Stanford University, where Pfizer CEO Henry McKinnell is a member of the Stanford University Graduate School Business Advisory Council.

A signature campaign is now underway on the campus to protest Pfizer's alleged bullying tactics against the two Philippine officials, who allowed the importation and eventual local production of generic substitutes.

Pfizer claims the two officials, BFAD Director Leticia Barbara Gutierrez and Emilio Polig Jr., "actively induced and facilitated" the infringement of the multinational's prized patents.

Money-go-round

- A CALIFORNIA-BASED Internet company has started a web page, www.digeratical.com/dlsaa_signup.html, calling on the De La Salle alumni and students to protest the La Sallian Brothers' continued leadership of the oust-GMA movement.
- PHILIPPINE Free Press publisher Enrique Locsin has admitted that, on top of the P1.5-million "housing" loan that he received as a Malacañang nominee to Philcomsat Holdings Corp., he was also given a Nissan Cefiro as executive transport by the money-losing corporation.

Locsin maintains that the Jaguar X that he bought right after he was appointed to the PHC board was paid for by him, contrary to what he had told his own Manila Times, where he was a short-lived publisher, that he merely "borrowed" the luxury saloon.

Heard through the grapevine

A HIGH-SOCIETY couturier has accumulated two years of unpaid rent on his apartment-atelier, telling his hapless landlord that his dwindling *matrona* clientele have in turn been dodging him on their long overdue bills.

A large part of the problem is that the couturier has no real financial manager who should have husbanded his multimillion-peso earnings when he was still on top of the game.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

Profit-taking . . .

From page B1

Analysts, however, said the index might continue its healthy correction this week.

"After two months of relentlessly rising, the market is finally in a corrective mode. The market's recent run-up appears to make little sense in the short term as full year price targets are being hit six months ahead of schedule. However, it makes perfect sense for long-term investors," AB Capital Securities wrote in a report.

"What is important is that investments have the potential to perform up to expectations in the long run. The macroeconomic outlook is very positive with the country's economic growth being upgraded, the fiscal deficit expected to dwindle and corporate profits seen to remain healthy. So with the market in a corrective mode, investors should look around for the great, solid, blue chip companies that are expected to get the most attention from fund managers," AB Capital Securities said.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

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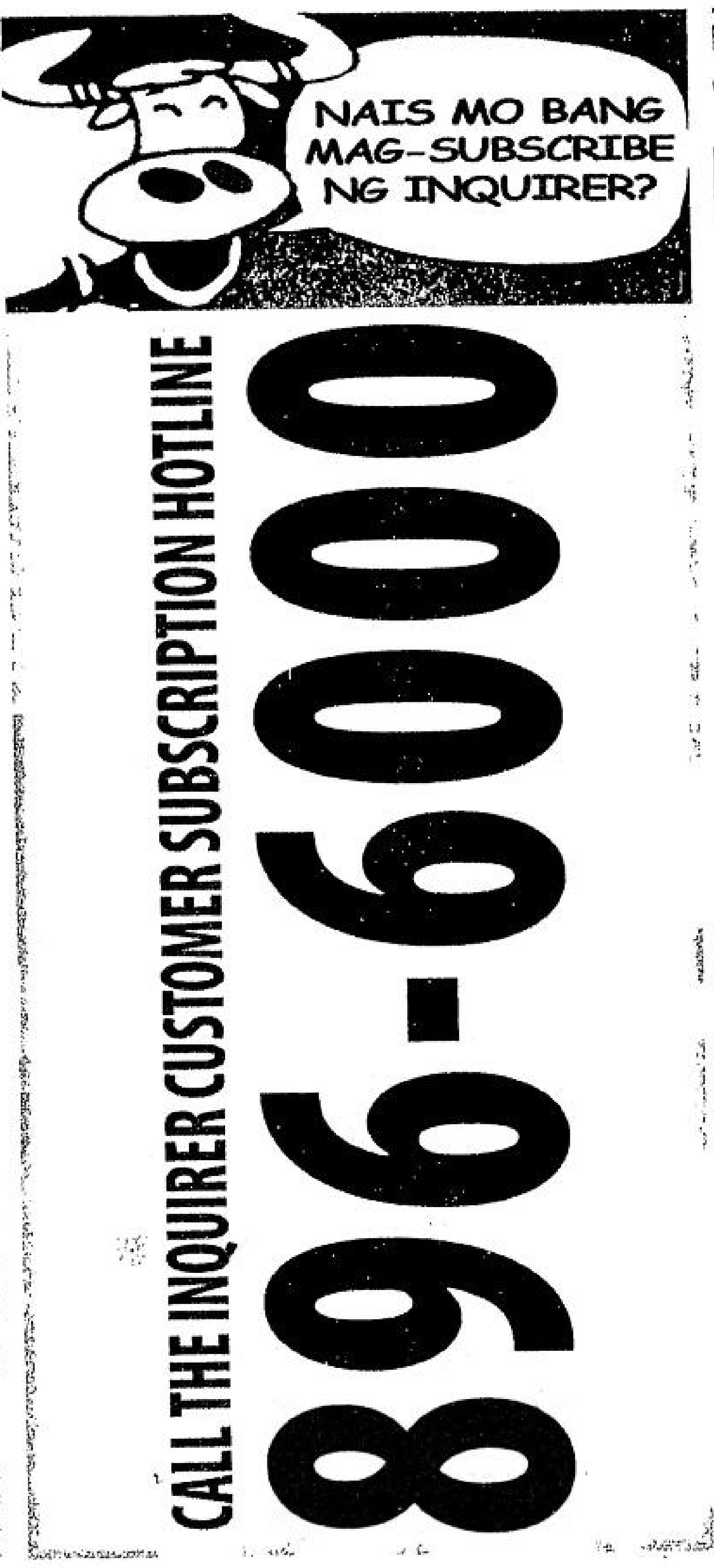

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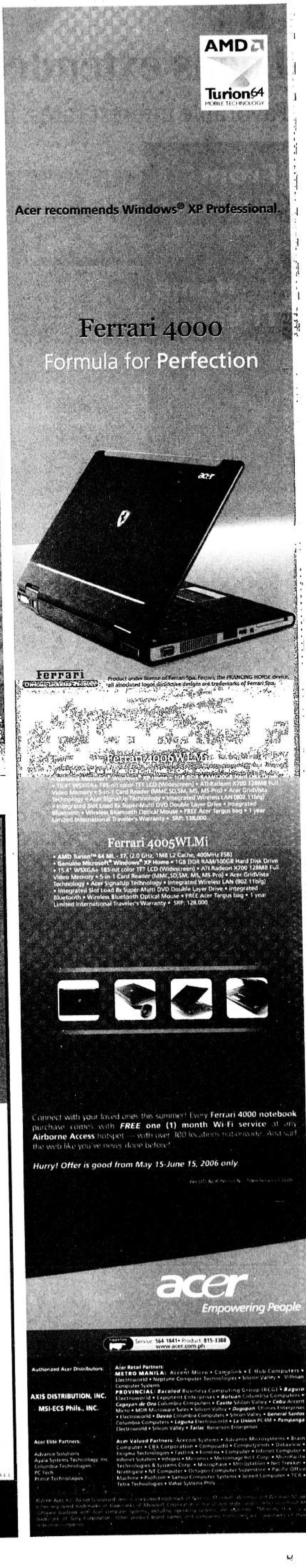

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Loans extended by commercial banks down

Favorable interest rates, improved business sentiment seen to boost demand

By Doris C. Dumlao

COMMERCIAL BANK LENDING in the country remains anemic, even shrinking for the first time in two years in March, based on a Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas report.

Outstanding bank loans went down by 0.5 percent to P1.54 trillion as of end-March from year-ago, reversing the modest growth seen in the last 24 months.

"The commercial banks' lending activity continues to be moderate as a result of sluggish corporate demand, with loans confined mainly to short-term financing for working capital and seasonal importation requirements," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. explained.

"Also, banks have remained generally cautious in lending given prevailing levels of non-performing loans," he said.

The BSP chief said outstanding loans to most sectors contracted, including disbursements for construction (down by 28.5 percent), wholesale and retail trade (-10.5 percent), manufacturing (-5.8 percent) and transportation, storage and communication (-5.5 percent).

But Tetangco said the BSP remained committed to strengthening the financial sector by helping banks reduce their non-performing loans and improve their asset quality.

He said demand for loans should be perked up by favorable domestic interest rates and improved business sentiment as a result of steady progress in fiscal consolidation and other key economic reforms.

UBS senior economist for Southeast Asia Christa Janjic said bank lending in the Philippines remained anemic due to banks' high non-performing loans and assets, weak capital base and high lending rates despite falling Treasury bill and bond yields.

But she said "the building blocks may be coming together" as the banks' bad assets had been falling sharply on the back of the Special Purpose Vehicle framework which provides fiscal incentives to the sale of problematic loans and foreclosed properties.

"The SPV is likely to be used more extensively as real estate prices have started to rise," Janjic said.

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The Real Stripes Matter.

TAIPAN Henry Sy's 24th mall open for business

SM Prime seeks end to tax row in Clark

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC Zone—Between state-owned Clark Development Corp. and the Angeles City government, to which should SM Prime Holdings Inc. pay taxes?

The dispute remained unsettled but Hans Sy, president of the retail giant, opened SM City Clark here on Thursday with high hopes that the conflict would come to a close soon.

"We are asking CDC and Angeles City to, hopefully, amicably settle the issue and whatever direction [they set], we will follow," Sy said during the opening of SM City Clark, the 24th SM mall in the country.

Hans Sy said SM Prime was committed to "pay whatever we need to pay but we don't want to pay double."

Angeles Mayor Carmelo Lazatin has asserted the city government's right to claim local taxes, saying the SM property inside Clark is part of Angeles City.

Lazatin also cited the Supreme Court's July 2005 ruling that Clark investors were not entitled to tax incentives and duty free privileges.

On the strength of a local court's order that favored the Angeles government, SM Prime did pay, albeit under protest, at least P3 million in building and zoning permits.

The firm, Lazatin said, has yet to pay for its business permits.

Mabalacat Mayor Marino Morales said he was going to assert the same if SM Prime expands to the northern side of Clark.

Both Lazatin and Morales attended the mall's opening, saying in separate interviews they were willing to resolve the matter with CDC on the common ground that they wanted to protect Clark investors from making double payments.

The younger Sy said SM Prime's contract with the CDC treated the company "just like an ordinary investor."

"Quite frankly, our contract with the CDC from the very start [stated] that there is no exemption to the rule," he said.

This means that like other Clark investors, SM Prime was required to pay only 5 percent of gross income.

SM PRIME/ B10

CalPERS stocks in RP up

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK MARKET is getting more investments from the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS), the biggest US pension fund.

The Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) disclosed yesterday that records it examined showed that CalPERS' investments in local stocks reached $78.33 million during the pension fund's last fiscal year ending June 30, 2005.

The amount was 16.47 percent higher than the $67.25 million worth of CalPERS' investments in local stocks at the end of its previous fiscal year, the PSE said.

In a statement, PSE president and chief executive officer Francis Lim said the data confirmed the increasing flow of investments from CalPERS to the local stock market.

"I expect other investors to take their cue from CalPERS, because its decisions influence the global direction of managed funds," Lim said after the PSE conducted a study of CalPERS' investments.

The PSEi, which tracks the movement of local stock prices, has so far gained 20 percent since the start of the year until last Friday.

The PSE reviewed reports of CalPERS' investments in the country since June 30, 1999, when it kept $57.27 million in local stock market investments. The amount dropped to $19.29 million in 2000, $16.82 million in 2001 and $12.46 million in 2002. "I think 2002 was the time when CalPERS entertained its worst doubts about our country's future," Lim said.

But CalPERS investments in local stocks jumped to $41.86 million at the end of the pension fund's 2003 fiscal year to $67.25 million and to $78.33 million at the end of its fiscal year 2005.

Lim said this translated to an average annual increase of 104 percent from 2002 to 2005.

"We have reason to believe that the value of the Philippine investments of CalPERS in June 2005 may have reached $106 million as of end-April 2006.

"This means that within a span of 10 months, CalPERS may have enjoyed a 35.3-percent increase in the value of its Philippine stocks," Lim said.

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When secrecy goes too far

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

SECRECY AND CONFIDENTIALITY are so institutionalized in our system to such excess that it has gone in the way of effective governance and even general economic welfare. Put aside for now the question on whether bank records of suspected big-time tax evaders should be open to scrutiny by the government, particularly the tax authorities. This is a case of government access to information being held by the private sector. (Even here, one might ask: What is government for if it could not exercise its authority and prerogative to be able to properly enforce the law, i.e. tax laws in this case?)

Here I focus on sharing of information within the government itself. Case in point: Information that could potentially increase overall government revenues dramatically is not even being shared among various units of government, in the name of tax confidentiality supposedly provided in our laws.

LGU constraints

For many years, local governments have lamented how they are often faulted for being too dependent on the national government's internal revenue allotment (IRA) for their funding resource requirements. But their own capability to raise local revenues is often severely hampered by constraints imposed by the national government itself.

Take the case of local business taxes, the second biggest potential source of local revenues next to the real property tax. LGUs, especially cities and municipalities, are empowered to collect business taxes based on gross revenues of business enterprises within their localities. But they are unable to raise enough revenues from this tax, for at least two reasons.

Secretive BIR

First, LGUs can never know for sure if the level of gross revenues declared by their local business taxpayers is accurate. Chances are, they are not. Businesses have an obvious incentive to understate their true revenues to minimize their tax payments to the local governments. And the latter, for now, have no way of determining if the reported revenues are true or not. That information is possessed by the Bureau of Internal Revenue. Never mind that the tax declarations submitted by the businesses to BIR may be understated as well. At least, it's a start for the LGUs. That is why Section 171 of the Local Government Code says: "...the records of the revenue district office of the Bureau of Internal Revenue shall be made available to the local treasurer, his deputy or duly authorized representative." But is this information indeed being shared? Unfortunately, no. BIR thinks another law prevents them from doing so. More on this below.

Makati windfall

The second reason LGUs in the provinces can't raise enough from business taxes is that the income of the branches of big businesses operating in their localities is usually consolidated and reported at their head office. The problem is not confined to business income of local-based branches of taxable enterprises. When a local branch of a big company borrows from a local branch of a big bank, the loan is booked at the bank's head office, and the taxes paid on the loan (e.g. documentary stamp taxes, income tax on interest earnings on the loan) get paid at the bank head office in Metro Manila (most often Makati). The result is that Makati (or other Metro Manila cities hosting company headquarters) gets an undue share of the taxes collected, including those that would rightfully accrue to local governments hosting branches of big companies or banks.

Again, information with the BIR could help sort things out and permit countryside LGUs to obtain higher tax revenues than they are otherwise able to raise at present. Benefits from the information sharing can go both ways. I'm told that the BIR Revenue District Office for Quezon City has in its registry only 30,000 business units in the City. However, a tax mapping and inventory by the Quezon City Treasurer's Office actually yielded 60,000 business units in the city, or double the BIR number. The latter could collect so much more taxes using information the LGUs can give them!

Piercing the veil

There should be a way to pierce this veil of secrecy that is constantly invoked at the expense of LGUs. The law that the BIR invokes is the National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC), specifically Section 270 that would penalize "any officer or employee of the BIR who divulges... information regarding the business, income or estate of any taxpayer, the secrets, operation, style or work, or apparatus of any manufacturer or producer, or confidential information regarding the business of any taxpayer, knowledge of which was acquired by him in the discharge of his official duties."

But the same section gives the opening, as it provides the exception: "Except as provided in Section 71 of this Code and Section 26 of Republic Act No. 6388." NIRC Section 71 in fact says that tax returns "shall constitute public records and (shall) be open to inspection as such upon the order of the President of the Philippines, under rules and regulations to be prescribed by the Secretary of Finance, upon recommendation of the Commissioner." I'm no lawyer, but it seems to me it has always been within the power of the President and the Finance Secretary to break this long-standing impasse.

Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

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	as of 5/4/2006	as of 5/11/2006
Philamlife Fixed Income Fund	1.3141	1.3206
Philamlife Equity Fund	1.3237	1.4374

Fund prices are net of transaction costs. These investment funds are specific for variable life insurance contracts and are not considered mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission.
PHILAM LIFE

Globe to save ₱2.5B from 3G tax perks

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE COUNTRY'S SECOND-biggest telecommunications firm will enjoy up to P2.5 billion worth of tax benefits after the government approved the granting of tax perks for its third-generation (3G) mobile phone service.

The savings may translate to more affordable 3G services for clients of Globe Telecom Inc. as the company strives to bring in more subscribers.

Speaking to reporters recently, Globe president and CEO Gerardo C. Ablaza Jr. said the savings would be spread out over the six-year period of the tax holiday period.

Since the service is at an early stage, however, he said the actual benefits would be felt more over the medium term, rather than immediately.

"Hardly any of that amount will accrue this year," Ablaza said.

Earlier this month, the Board of Investments approved the granting of tax perks to Globe for its P5.48-billion foray into the 3G business.

Trade Undersecretary Elmer C. Hernandez said Globe's project was given a pioneer status based on the amount involved.

Hernandez, who is also BOI managing head, said that under the new registration, Globe was classified as a new operator of infrastructure and telecommunications facilities.

The company is qualified for a six-year tax holiday, duty-free importation of capital goods and other fiscal and nonfiscal incentives.

The 3G service allows users to make video calls with their mobile phones as well as download video clips, surf the Internet at high speed, and even watch television broadcasts, among others.

Globe is already getting ready to expand its facilities to be able to meet the market's demand for 3G services as it grows.

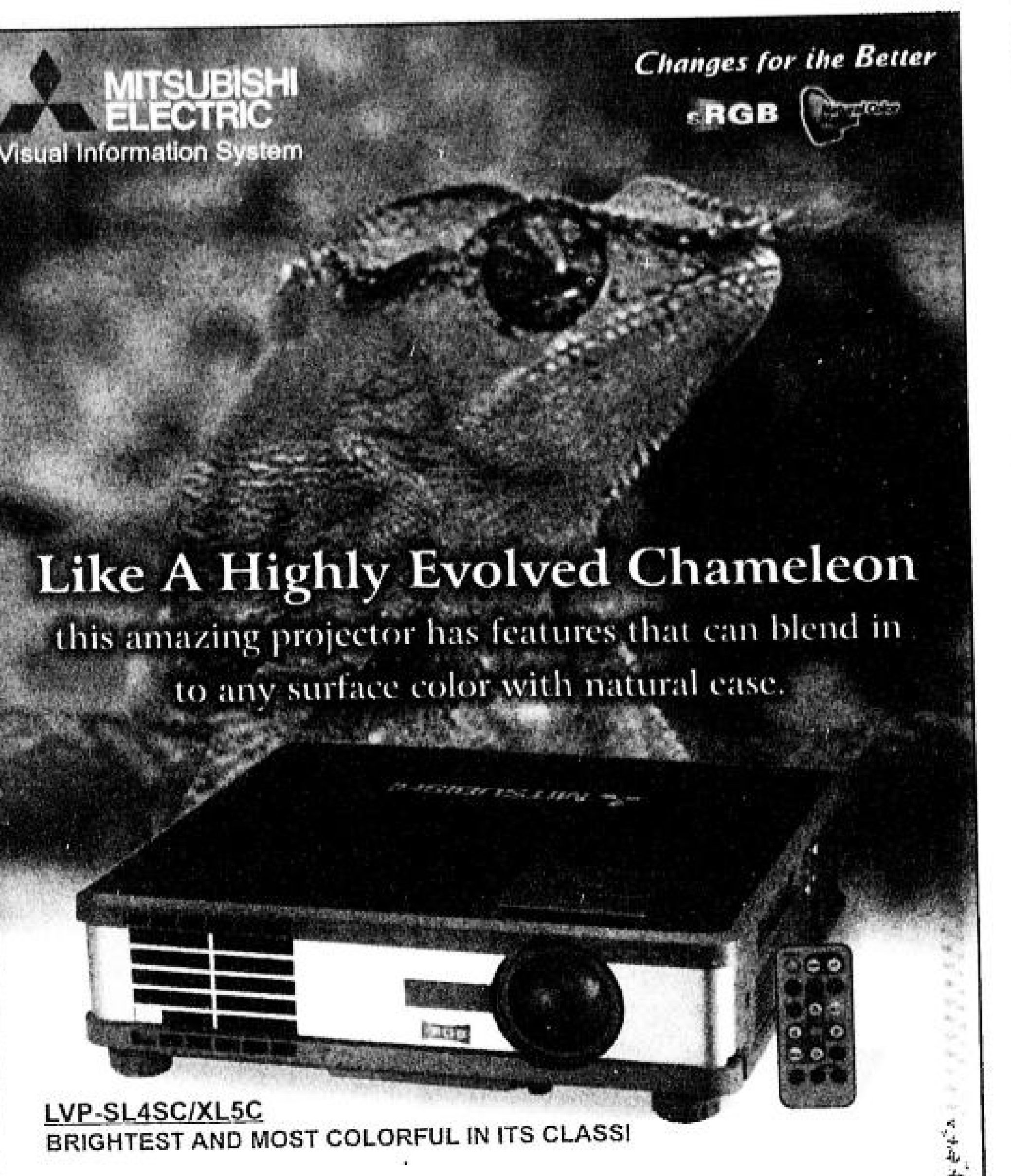
Last week, the company said it would borrow as much as $130 million from creditors to finance its expansion. Of this, up to $70 million would be dedicated to the 3G service, particularly the setting up of additional base stations nationwide.

Ablaza said the amount might be drawn in US dollars or its peso equivalent, depending on which currency would be more advantageous for the firm.

At present, Globe has 150 base stations for 3G services. It hopes to raise this number to 1,000 under the expansion plan to make 3G services accessible nationwide.

Globe has committed to put up at least 2,500 3G base stations over the next five years as one of the conditions for its 3G license from the National Telecommunications Commission.

No tax perks have yet been granted to Globe's main rival, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. and its wireless subsidiary Smart Communications Inc., although the company is expected to file a similar petition with the BOI.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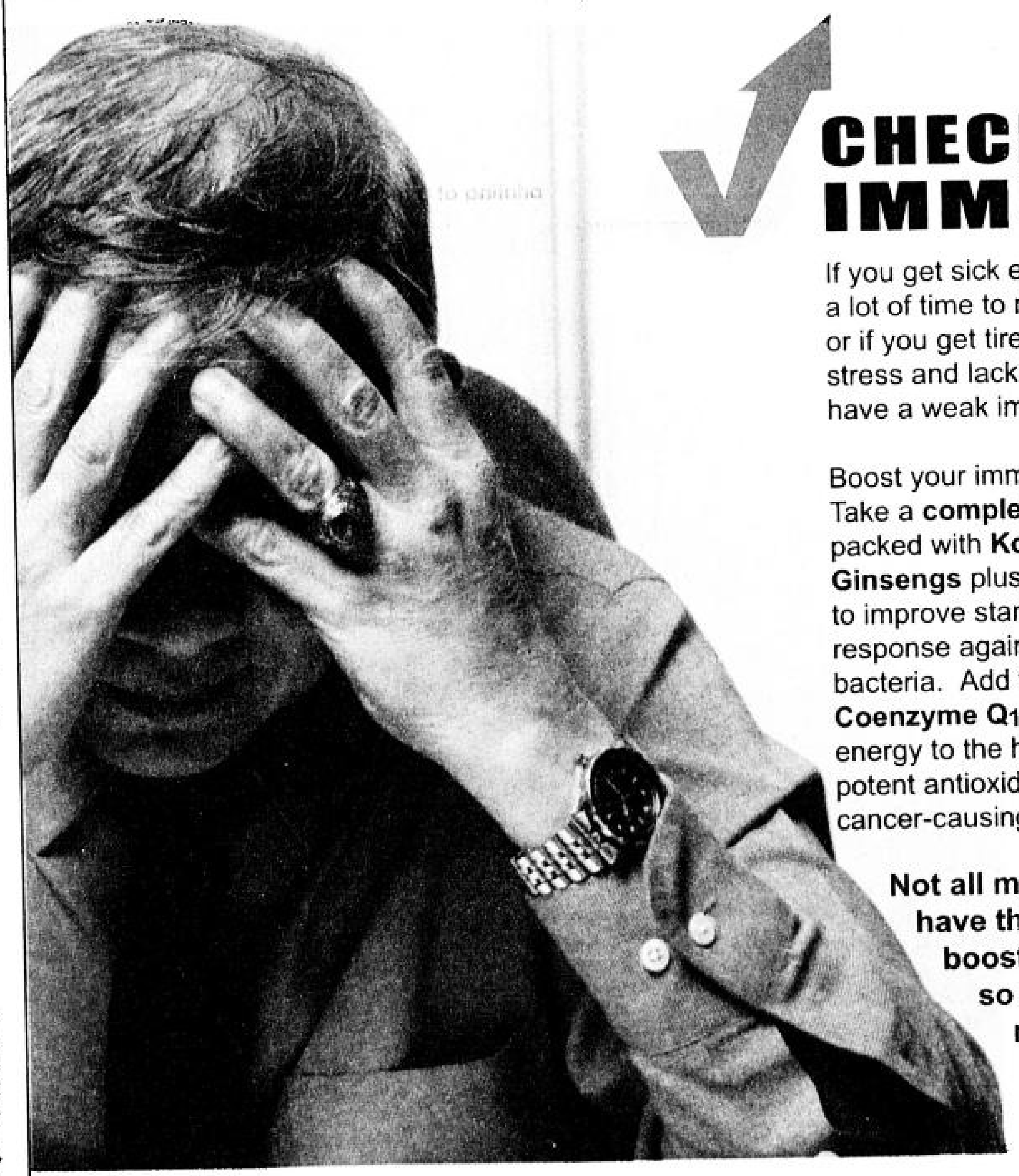

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Court okays rehab of Platinum Plans

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

A MAKATI REGIONAL TRIAL COURT HAS approved a rehabilitation plan by Platinum Plans Philippines Inc., saying the value of the pre-need company's existing assets can satisfy the needs of its creditors and plan holders.

On June 28 last year, Platinum Plans sought court protection to suspend all claims filed against it by creditors and plan holders. The court gave due course to the petition and referred it to the rehabilitation receiver.

In a five-page decision dated April 27, 2005, Makati RTC Judge Romeo Barza said the revised rehabilitation plan of Platinum was approved for immediate implementation and execution.

"The court believes that the revised rehabilitation plan is feasible, viable and doable simply because the realizable value of its existing assets can provide adequate cover to satisfy all the corporate creditors and provide a mode of settling with all the plan holders," Barza wrote.

Under the approved 8-year recovery plan, all real estate assets will be placed in trust with third parties primarily for distribution, payment or settlement to all stakeholders.

Platinum will allot P150 million for initial operations mainly from the sale of its real estate assets in order to settle plans that have matured and to pay termination values of plan holders and those plans that have not yet matured.

The rehabilitation receiver will also be allowed to increase the P150-million fund by an additional P100 million if necessary, from the sale of more property assets.

The settlement of all obligations due to government agencies and bank creditors will take priority and will be paid out of proceeds from the sale of real estate assets not later than 48 months or four years from the date of the approval of the rehabilitation plan.

Obligations will be restructured as follows: Reduction of all interest charges to 6 percent a year from a minimum of 12 percent a year; restructuring all unpaid interest charges at 6 percent a year and waiving all penalties and charges.

SMC unit allots P2B for expansion

SAN MIGUEL PURE Foods Co. Inc. is spending P2 billion this year to expand its production facilities to take advantage of new growth opportunities.

SMPFC chair Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. said the plan included the expansion into the lucrative snack segment as the company builds a new plant in an industrial zone in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

"Product innovation and development will continue to be a cornerstone of our growth strategy, especially as we go into more value-added products," Cojuangco told stockholders last Friday.

San Miguel's plan to venture into branded snack foods will be under San Miguel Mills Inc., a company for milled commodities and cereal-based value-added products.

Cojuangco said that aside from snack foods, San Miguel Mills might also manufacture noodle products.

"We will penetrate new business segments and achieve product differentiation. Already, we are set to launch our first branded snack foods, marking our entry into yet another lucrative market," Cojuangco said.

SMPFC president Francis Alejo III said the company has launched a "chip and dip" product dubbed "e-aji" for the high-market.

The capital expenditure this year already included that for the expansion of its 60-ton-an-hour Bataan feed mill, the biggest facility in Southeast Asia.

Higher volumes from branded products allowed SMPFCI to post a net profit of P107.4 million in the first quarter. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of May 12, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	7.2	7.2	7.1	7.1	43,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	37.5	37.5	37	37.5	169,500
Bank of the Phil. Islands	69.5	70	68	68	1,708,400
China Banking Corp.	905	905	900	900	1,200
Citystate Savings Bank	20.25	20.25	20.25	20.25	600
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.46	0.46	0.45	0.46	5,710,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	71.5	72	71	72	206,500
International Exch. Bank	39.5	40	39.5	39.5	12,200
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	43.5	44.5	42	42.5	567,200
Philippine National Bank	37.5	37.5	37	37.5	33,000
Phil. Savings Bank	39	39.5	39	39.5	10,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	19	19.25	18.75	18.75	105,000
Security Bank Corp.	58	58	57	57	1,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	47.5	47.5	47	47	12,000
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	130,000
First Abacus Financial	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	100,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	32	32	32	32	10,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	4000	4000	3900	3900	720
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.04	1.04	1	1	285,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	210	210	210	210	500
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2140	2140	2130	2130	550
Ivantage Corp.	1.28	1.28	1.2	1.24	7,910,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	51	51	49.5	51	634,100
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	51.5	52	51	52	808,300
Manila Electric Co. A	14.5	14.5	14.25	14.5	94,500
Manila Electric Co. B	21.5	22	21.5	22	1,458,000
Manila Water Co. Inc.	7.8	7.8	7.7	7.7	3,221,000
Petron Corp.	4.9	4.9	4.75	4.85	7,974,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.235	0.25	0.23	0.25	1,870,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.16	1.18	1.12	1.14	907,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	4,000
CADP Group Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	30,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	25	25	23.75	24.25	231,600
Jollibee Foods Corp.	38.5	38.5	37	37.5	489,600
Pancake House Inc.	4.05	4.05	4.05	4.05	35,000
RFM Corp.	0.77	0.77	0.75	0.75	130,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	3.5	3.55	3.35	3.35	2,799,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	200,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63	64	62.5	64	97,000
San Miguel Corp. B	82	82.5	82	82.5	90,700
Universal Robina Corp.	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5	964,200
Vitarich Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	500,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.37	0.37	0.36	0.36	4,810,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.86	1.86	1.8	1.8	4,288,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	1.82	1.84	1.74	1.74	340,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.3	2,366,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.72	190,000
CHEMICALS					
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	2.8	3	2.8	2.8	118,000
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.13	0.135	0.12	0.13	37,390,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	2,000,000
Panasonic Mfg Phil Corp.	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	3,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	780,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	15,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0075	0.0085	0.0075	0.0085	19,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	2,000,000
Ayala Corp.	455	455	445	447.5	198,870
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.52	0.59	0.52	0.58	1,280,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	6.6	6.6	6.2	6.5	5,412,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	13,100,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.5	3.55	3.4	3.4	6,949,000
APC Group Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.26	0.28	6,740,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.009	0.0095	0.009	0.0095	360,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.2	1.26	1.2	1.26	7,267,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.38	1.56	1.32	1.56	507,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.9	1	0.9	1	140,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.9	10	9.9	10	33,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.24	1.28	1.22	1.26	22,939,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	4.85	4.85	4.65	4.8	3,795,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	3.75	3.75	3.7	3.75	443,000
House Of Investments Inc.	1.74	1.74	1.7	1.7	1,105,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	7.8	7.9	7.7	7.8	1,029,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	140,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.22	0.225	5,690,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	34,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.16	0.16	0.155	0.16	30,270,000
SM Investments Corp.	250	250	247	249	64,770
South China Resources Inc.	1	1.16	1	1.14	1,780,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.1	1.14	1.1	1.12	233,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	10,400,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	2,500,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	14.5	14.5	14	14.25	8,199,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	50,000
Belle Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.3	1.34	15,194,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	19,170,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	2.34	2.36	2.3	2.36	1,905,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.84	1.84	1.84	1.84	1,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	350,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.68	0.69	0.67	0.68	48,980,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	30,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	500,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.67	0.68	0.67	0.68	500,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.72	1.72	11,625,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.085	0.085	0.08	0.08	200,000
Interport Res.	0.009	0.01	0.009	0.01	221,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0095	0.01	0.009	0.01	207,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	110,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	380,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.82	1.82	1.76	1.78	34,245,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	21,090,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.27	4,770,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	11.75	12.75	11.75	12.5	947,200
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.33	2,460,000
SM Development Corp.	1.8	1.82	1.8	1.8	636,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.7	8.7	8.6	8.6	4,673,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.115	0.115	5,760,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	16	17.5	16	17	242,400
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	10,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.28	1.28	1.24	1.24	7,062,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1060	1065	1025	1030	66,780
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.65	3.85	3.65	3.75	21,595,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2120	2145	2110	2135	254,280
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.27	0.24	0.25	26,510,000
Ionics Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.4	1.42	225,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	400,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.049	0.049	0.048	0.049	3,800,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.18	1.2	247,000
Philweb Corp.	0.027	0.028	0.027	0.028	134,900,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	3.1	3.15	3.1	3.1	174,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	14	14	13.5	13.75	579,100
Keppel Phils Marine Inc.	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96	60,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	4,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.66	1.68	1,801,000
Manila Jockey Club	3	3	3	3	226,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.6	0.62	0.59	0.6	1,220,000
EDUCATION					
IPeople Inc.	3.3	3.35	3.3	3.35	394,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.75	2.9	2.65	2.85	4,152,000
Paxys Inc.	12.25	12.25	11.75	12.25	917,800
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.3	6.2	5.3	6.2	27,565,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.5	6.4	5.5	6.4	13,459,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.01	0.011	0.0095	0.01	561,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8.2	9.3	8.1	9.3	21,170,000
Benguet Corp. A	13.5	14.75	12.75	14.75	606,800
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	3.3	3.3	2.06	2.55	426,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.42	0.43	0.41	0.42	68,330,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.46	0.47	0.45	0.46	28,890,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.027	0.027	0.026	0.027	248,100,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	111,900,000
Omico Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.0075	0.0075	169,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	5.6	5.9	5.4	5.4	26,346,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	5.6	5.9	5.4	5.4	21,895,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	30.5	31.5	30.5	31	5,131,200
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.47	0.49	0.43	0.48	7,810,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.8	6,280,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.33	0.35	0.32	0.33	9,770,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.013	0.014	0.012	0.013	361,200,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.014	0.014	0.013	0.013	158,800,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.6	1.82	1.6	1.72	19,842,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.6	1.82	1.6	1.76	8,336,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	17.75	18.5	16.25	16.5	2,457,900
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	5,200
PLDT 10% Pref Series AA	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,500
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	16	18	16	17.75	1,140,800

CURRENCIES

May 12, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.778695	1.000000	51.6040
Japan	Yen	0.007043	0.009044	0.4667
United Kingdom	Pound	1.466205	1.882900	97.1652
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.100443	0.128989	6.6563
Switzerland	Franc	0.641958	0.824402	42.5424
Canada	Dollar	0.706491	0.907276	46.8191
Singapore	Dollar	0.497124	0.638407	32.9444
Australia	Dollar	0.604952	0.776880	40.0901
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.065614	2.652661	136.8879
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.207647	0.266660	13.7607
Brunei	Dollar	0.495542	0.636375	32.8395
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000090	0.000115	0.0059
Thailand	Baht	0.020642	0.026508	1.3679
UAE	Dirham	0.212034	0.272294	14.0515
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.284200	66.2699
Argentina	Peso	0.256571	0.329489	17.0030
Brazil	Real	0.373295	0.479386	24.7382
Denmark	Kroner	0.134110	0.172224	8.8874
India	Rupee	0.017351	0.022282	1.1498
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.217513	0.279330	14.4145
Mexico	New Peso	0.071522	0.091848	4.7397
New Zealand	Dollar	0.491352	0.630994	32.5618
South Africa	Rand	0.128944	0.165590	8.5451
Korea	Won	0.000832	0.001069	0.0552
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024760	0.031797	1.6409

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CANLUBANG GOLF CLUB	500K
EAGLERIDGE B	330K
*FOREST HILLS B	180K
*MAKATI SPORTS	180K
*MANILA GOLF CORP	12.0M
MANILA POLO CLUB	PLS. CALL
*MANILA SOUTHWOODS A	300K
*MANILA SOUTHWOODS B	700K
MANILA YACHT CLUB	350K
ORCHARD B	350K
PUNTA FUEGO	400K
QUEZON CITY SPORTS	150K
ROCKWELL CLUB	230K
ROYALE TAGAYTAY	70K
SUBIC GOLF CLUB	120K
TAGAYTAY HIGLANDS	650K
THE PALMS	430K
TOWER CLUB C	300K
VALLE CERDE	90K
WACK WACK	PLS. CALL

BUYING

ALTA VISTA B	350K
BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	PLS. CALL
CAMP JOHN HAY	200K
CLUB FILIPINO	90K
CLUB PUNTA FUEGO	PLS. CALL
EAGLERIDGE B	PLS. CAL
EASTRIDGE B	100K
FAIRWAYS & BLUEWATER A1	100K
MANILA GOLF IND	11.0M
MANILA GOLF CORP	11.5M
MANILA POLO CLUB	2.6M
MANILA SOUTHWOODS B	PLS. CALL
METROCLUB	130K
MIMOSA GOLF IND	170K
ORCHARD A	PLS. CALL
ORCHARD B	PLS. CALL
SPA & LODGE	400K
STA. ELENA A	1.0M
STA. ELENA B	PLS. CALL
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	600K
THE PALMS	400K
WACK WACK	6.2M

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Alta Vista B/Corp.*	-	Pls. Call/300,000*
Baguio Country Club	-	500,000
Camp John Hay	-	Pls. Call
Canlubang Golf	550,000	Pls. Call
Canyon Woods	120,000	-
Capitol Hills	60,000	-
Cebu Country Club	Pls. Call	1,350,000
Celebrity Sports	120,000	100,000
Club Filipino	110,000	-
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	330,000*/Pls. Call	100,000/Pls. Call*
Eastridge A/B*	Pls. Call	-
Evercrest	85,000	-
Fairways & Bluewater	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	130,000/180,000*	Pls. Call*
Luisita Golf	Pls. Call	300,000
Manila Golf Corporate	Pls. Call	11,500,000
Manila Golf Individual	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Manila Polo	Pls. Call	2,400,000
Manila Southwoods A/B*	350,000/750,000*	300,000/700,000*
Makati Sports Club	180,000	160,000
Manila Yacht Club Ind.	350,000	-
Metropolitan Club A/B*	180,000	100,000
Mimosa Ind./C2*/C3**	Pls. Call	150,000/300,000*/420,000**
Mt. Malarayat A	230,000	-
Orchard A/B*/C**	180,000/Pls. Call*/400,000**	150,000
Punta Fuego	400,000	-
Quezon City Sports Club	160,000	Pls. Call
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	90,000/150,000*/250,000**	Pls. Call*
Rockwell Leisure Club	Pls. Call	-
Royale Tagaytay CC	80,000	-
Sherwood A/B*/C**	70,000/150,000**	-
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	1,150,000	1,100,000/1,550,000*
The Palms Country Club	420,000	-
Tagaytay Country Club	330,000	300,000
Tagaytay Highlands	580,000	-
Tagaytay Midlands	Pls Call	600,000
The Country Club	2,000,000	-
Tower Club	160,000	130,000
Valley Golf	210,000	-
Valle Verde Ind.	100,000	-
Wack Wack Golf	6,301,000	6,200,000

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Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	1,200,000	-
Anvaya Cove Beach and Nature Club	Please Call	-
Baguio Country Club	550,000	520,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	40,000	25,000
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	70,000	-
Camp John Hay	210,000	190,000
Canlubang	500,000	400,000
Capitol Hills	60,000	45,000
Cebu Country Club	1,900,000	1,350,000
Celebrity Sports Club	120,000	100,000
Club Filipino	100,000	-
Eagleridge "A"/"B"/"C"	Please Call	-
Forest Hills "A"	100,000	-
Forest Hills "B"	170,000	-
Forest Hills "C"	160,000	-
Makati Sports Club "A"	180,000	165,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	250,000	-
Manila Golf (Corporate)	-	12,000,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	-	11,300,000
Manila Polo	-	2,500,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	340,000	300,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	750,000	600,000
Manila Yacht Club	310,000	200,000
Mimosa (Individual)	-	180,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	-	500,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	200,000	-
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	350,000	-
Orchard Golf Club "A"	160,000	140,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	-	350,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	350,000	-
Quezon City Sports Club	170,000	-
Riviera Sports	50,000	-
Spa & Lodge	450,000	400,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,200,000	1,100,000
Subic Bay Golf	200,000	-
Tagaytay Country Club	340,000	300,000
Tagaytay Highlands	680,000	600,000
Tagaytay Midlands	650,000	600,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	90,000	-
Valle Verde (Corporate)	200,000	150,000
Valley Golf	210,000	180,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	6,300,000	6,200,000

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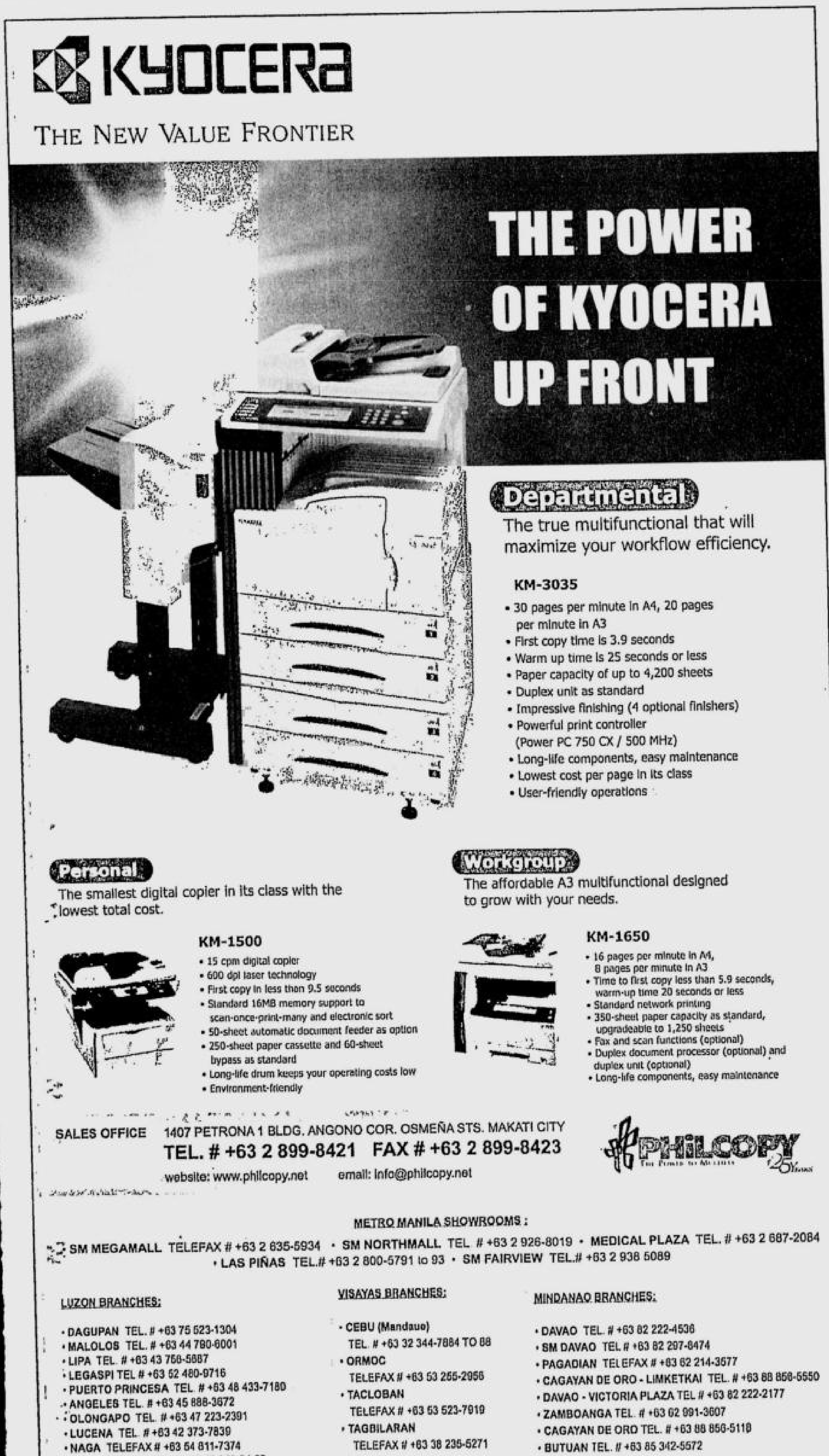

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In face of fiercer rivalry, Metrobank out to keep top spot

By Doris C. Dumlao

METROPOLITAN BANK AND Trust Co., under its new president Arthur Ty, has mapped out a fresh growth strategy to cement its status as the country's biggest bank, as well as boost its profitability and franchise.

In a press statement, Ty vowed to keep Metrobank on top and fend off fierce rivals like Bank of the Philippine Islands, Banco de Oro Universal Bank and Union Bank of the Philippines.

"The competition gets keener every day," Ty said. "To be the best, it is no longer enough just to be the biggest. It means being recognized as the industry leader by all of our stakeholders, our customers, our employees, our regulators, and our shareholders."

Under Ty's leadership, Metrobank plans to maximize the full potential of its extensive branch network, expand its coverage of corporate, middle market and consumer markets, and build on the strong reputation it has maintained throughout its 43-year history.

"Executing our strategy correctly will translate into gains for our shareholders, strengthen our balance sheet, earning potential and franchise, and secure our position as the industry leader for more years to come," Ty said.

With this transition, the bank said it would chart a series of changes, including beefing-up its senior management corps, reviewing its business processes, revitalizing sales capabilities, aligning business units and adopting new technology, all aimed at setting the groundwork required for the new strategy.

In the same vein, Metrobank has allowed the infusion of new people with fresh ideas to complement its pool of experts.

Also, Ty vowed to keep good customer service at the top of the bank's agenda.

"We are putting equal focus on strengthening existing customer relationships side-by-side with attracting new clients," Ty said.

He assured that the first-generation customers—made up of established businessmen and entrepreneurs who formed the core of Metrobank's clients—would continue to receive the personalized treatment that they are used to even as the bank enters into new relationships with emerging businesses.

"We are pushing ourselves to be a more market driven institution," Ty said.

Better risk management has likewise been identified as a priority.

"From a business perspective, the penalties for weak risk management, and the benefits of stronger compliance, are simply too large to ignore," Ty said.

Beyond simply following the directives of regulatory bodies, Ty advised his management team that the healthy consideration and management of market, credit and operational risks ought to be built into daily activities as part of doing good business.

Metrobank also continues to look for opportunities to substantially trim down its nonperforming assets by actively participating in various disposal engagements.

Tie-ups with main auction partners, direct sales via referrals from brokers and its own branch heads, volume sales and joint ventures with real estate developers are actively being pursued.

"The bank must maintain an unwavering focus on building long term value for its shareholders," Ty said.

In US, RP mangoes gaining ground

By Christine A. Gaylican

PHILIPPINE PROcessed mango exports are gaining wider acceptance in the American mainstream market, providing a much needed boost for the local fruit industry, an industry official said over the weekend.

The high quality Philippine carabao mangoes—some of which are dried, pureed or even turned into candies—are now selling well in the US market, according to Mango Exporters Federation Inc. president Roberto C. Amores.

"The mango industry as a whole performed fairly due to the entry and acceptance of processed mango products in the American mainstream market," Amores told the INQUIRER. "There is a market potential that needs to be served with enough volumes."

Amores said that the industry would have to cut deliveries by at least 20 percent this year due to the limited supply of mangoes that came in during the first quarter.

The mango exporters industry expects a significant increase in mango exports to the United States in 2007 after Washington proposed a set of rules that will make it easier for countries like the Philippines to export fruits and plants.

USDA data show a growing trend in mango consumption in the US, from 0.10 kilograms per capita in 1979 to 0.23 kilograms in 1989 and 0.81 kilograms in 2000.

Philippine data show earnings from mango exports reached $26.6 million in 2005, down about seven percent from $28.7 million in 2004.

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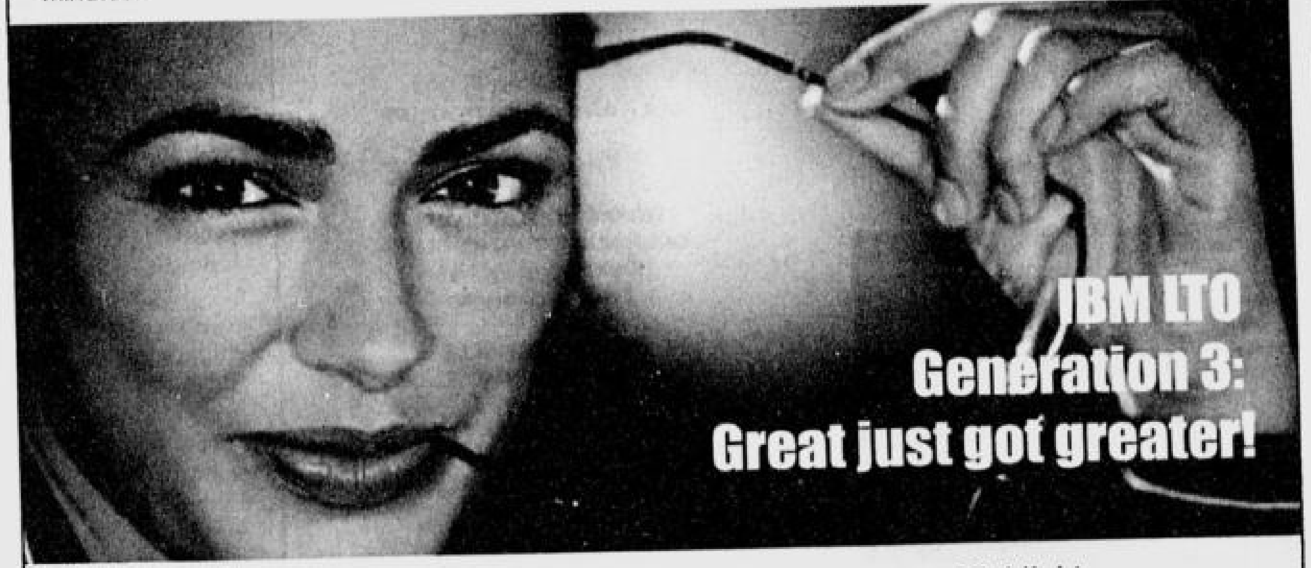
IBM, the inventor of tape technology 50 years ago, has done it again. IBM is again first off the blocks in making the latest Gen 3 Ultrium LTO tape drives commercially available in the Philippines today.

With the new generation of tape drives, you can now backup almost one terabyte (800GB compressed) of your valuable data on a single cartridge at a blistering speed of up to 80MB/s. Together with IBM's Tivoli Storage Manager software, what would usually take several hours of backup is now reduced to just minutes.



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FLOOR AREA	MIN. BID PRICE
450.90 sqm.	P 25,000,000
450.90 sqm.	P 25,000,000
455.00 sqm.	P 25,000,000

ROYAL PINES WEST TAGAYTAY
(Early American Themed Subdivision)

VARIOUS RESIDENTIAL LOT

LOT AREA	MIN. BID PRICE
536 sqm.	P 2,680,000.00
539 sqm.	P 2,695,000.00
542 sqm.	P 2,710,000.00
546 sqm.	P 2,730,000.00
567 sqm.	P 2,835,000.00

ANGONO, RIZAL

PREM_ANG 003
L.A. 1,617 sqm. F.A. 1,734 sqm.
(near Meralco & PLDT)
Aurora Ave. cor. Macopa St.,
AURORA SUBD San Isidro, Angono
Min Bid Price: P 13,505,380.00

ANTIPOLO, RIZAL

PREM_ANT 001 WAREHOUSE
L.A. 1,000 sqm. F.A. 826 sqm.
(near Sumulong Highway/Antipolo Church)
Quezon Ave., Ext., BRGY. SAN JOSE
Min. Bid Price: P 7,500,000.00

CSB_CNT002 INDUSTRIAL WAREHOUSE
L.A 3,828sqm. F.A. 3,057sqm
Along Tuazon Avenue
VALLEY GOLF SUBD., Cainta
Minimum Bid Price: P 34,335,000.00

CALOOCAN

EWB_CAL001 3 COMML/RSDL LOT
L.A. 5,915 sqm. (near Saranay Subd.)
BAGUMBONG
Min. Bid Price: P 7,689,500.00

KPI_CAL257 4-STORY APARTMENT
L.A. 94 sqm. F.A. 305.82 sqm.
PANGANIBAN ST., Bo. Calaanan
(near THE OUR LADY OF GRACE CHURCH)
Minimum Bid Price: P 4,000,000.00

LAS PIÑAS

ESB_LSP001 2-STORY HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 204 sqm. F.A. 256 sqm. No. 20
Jhocson St., BF EXECUTIVE VILL.,
Almanza (near Alabang)
Min. Bid Price: P 4,000,000.00

JAP_LSP006 2-STORY WAREHOUSE
L.A. 4,837sqm. F.A. 3,000 sqm.
(w/ monthly income P360K)
MANILA DOCTOR'S VILLAGE
(near SM South Mall)
Min. Bid Price: P55,000,000.00

JAP_LSP007 WAREHOUSE
L.A. 3,386 sqm. F.A. 2,000 sqm.
MANILA DOCTOR'S VILLAGE
(near SM South Mall)
Min. Bid Price: P47,000,000.00

PREM_LSP 036 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 387 sqm. F.A. 567.82 sqm.
SAN ISIDRO VILL. Pamplona 1
(near Christ The King Parish Chapel)
Min Bid Price: P 3,860,000.00

MAKATI

EWB_MKT002 OFFICE CONDO w/PRKG
F.A. 265.63 sqm. (finished unit)
THE WORLD CENTER TOWER
330 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. Salcedo Vill.
Min. Bid Price: P 12,353,350.00

ESB_MKT002 RSDL/COMML LOT
L.A. 578 sqm.
(near Vito Cruz/Pasong Tamo)
Davila St. and Mola St., M. Dela Paz Vill.
Min. Bid Price: P 9,000,000.00

JAP_MKT001 RSDL CONDO w/PRKG
F.A. 138 sqm. (near Sacred Heart Church)
METROPOLITAN TERRACES CONDO
Kamagong/ Metropolitan Sts.
Min. Bid Price: P4,200,000.00

JAP_MKT002 RESIDENTIAL CONDO
F.A. 115 sqm. (w/ PARKING SLOT)
WEST TOWER CONDO South Super
Highway cor. Lacuña, Bangkal
Min. Bid Price: P4,300,000.00

OSB_MKT001 OFFICE CONDO
F.A. 277.868/ 283.342 sqm.
(w/ 5 Parking Slot)
EQUITABLE TOWER CONDO.
Paseo de Roxas
Min. Bid Price: P 36,000,000.00

TPFP_MKT001 VACANT RESIDENTIAL LOT
HOOVER ST., Bgy. Pio Del Pilar

Lot Area	Minimum Bid Price
244 sqm.	P 4,636,000.00
247 sqm.	P 4,693,000.00

RYL_MKT004 RESIDENTIAL CONDO
F.A. 179 sqm (near Shell Mayа)
LE METROPOLE CONDO.
H.V. Dela Costa, SALCEDO VILLAGE
Min Bid Price: P6,265,000.00

MANILA

LSB_MLA001 - COMMERCIAL LOT
L.A. 1,328.06 sqm
(near Sebastian Church/CEU La Consolacion,
Holy Spirit & San Beda) Bilibid Viejo St.,
QUIAPO
Min Bid Price: P24,000,000.00

MUNTINLUPA

EWB_MUN003 COMMERCIAL LOT
L.A. 1,524 sqm. (near Festival Mall)
along Spectrum Midway & Singapura Lane
FILINVEST CORP City, Alabang
Min. Bid Price: P 60,000,000.00

JAP_MUN001 COMML CONDO w/PRKG
F.A. 144 sqm (near Ayala Alabang Village)
ALABANG BUSS. TOWER
Acacia Ave., Madrigal Buss. Park,
Min. Bid Price: P5,365,000.00

ORTIGAS CENTER, PASIG

KPI_PSG240 - OFFICE CONDO
F.A. 86.17 sqm. (near SM megamall)
ONE MAGNIFICENT MILE TOWER
CONDO., San Miguel Ave. Ortigas Center
Minimum Bid Price: P 3,500,000.00

OSB_PSG002 - OFFICE CONDO w/PRKG
F.A. 109 sqm. (near SM Megamall)
TEKTITE TOWERS CONDO.
Exchange Rd. Ortigas Center
Min. Bid Price: P 4,400,000.00

RYL_PSG001 RSDL CONDO w/PRKG
AIC GOLD TOWER, Emerald Ave., cor.
Garnet Ave. (back of Robinsons Galleria)

Floor Area	Minimum Bid Price
127.77 sqm.	P 3,846,000.00
127.77 sqm.	P4,800,000.00 (w/antipolo view)

PARAÑAQUE

EWB_PRQ004 RESIDENTIAL CONDO
F.A. 356.61 sqm.
CLEVELAND TOWER, Pacific Ave.,
cor. Ocean Drive Asiaworld City
Min. Bid Price: P 16,000,000.00

KPI_PRQ266 - RESIDENTIAL UNIT
F.A. 105 sqm. (near Baclaran Church)
BAYVIEW TOWER 1, Roxas Blvd.
Minimum Bid Price: P 3,500,000.00

KPI_PRQ211 - 2-STORY RSD'L BLDG.
L.A. 518 sqm. F.A. 380 sqm.
(near Commercial Area)
Rainbow St., Bricktown Subd.,
MOONWALK VILLAGE
Minimum Bid Price: P 5,500,000.00

QUEZON CITY

ANC_QC 014 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 480 sqm. F.A. 500 sqm.
WHITE PLAINS SUBD.
Min. Bid Price: P 18,000,000.00

ATB_QC013 2 STRY 5 DOOR APARTMENT
L.A. 677.50 sqm. F.A. 859 sqm.
(near Quezon City Hall)
Mayaman St., UP VILLAGE
Min. Bid Price: P 10,000,000.00

KPI_QC315 - 3 STRY BLDG w/ PENTHOUSE
L.A. 2,183 sqm. F.A. 3,580 sqm.
(Keppel Bank Bldg.)
E. RODRIGUEZ AVE. (near Cubao MRT)
Minimum Bid Price: P 130,000,000.00

MU_QC001 TOWNHOUSE (under CCT)
NEW MANILA CREST 2
10TH Street, New Manila
(near Gilmore Ave.)

Floor Area	Minimum Bid Price
343.125 sqm.	P 13,400,000.00
343.125 sqm.	P 13,800,000.00

SAN JUAN

CSB_SJ005 - 5-STORY BLDG.
L.A 574sqm F.A 3,554 (44% FINISHED)
(near Xavier & ICA)
Hardboard cor. B. Padilla St.
LITTLE BAGUIO
Minimum Bid Price: P 24,858,926.74

JAP_BAG009 VACANT LOT
L.A. 2,617sqm.
Montecillo/ WEST BAKAYENG RD., CAMP 7
Min. Bid Price: P5,200,000.00

KPI_SJ118 4-STORY TOWNHOUSE
F.A. 280 sqm. (w/ Parking)
LUXOR VILLAS TOWNHOMES,
Santolan Road (near Xavier & ICA Schools)
Minimum Bid Price: P 6,000,000.00

KPI_SJ284 1-STORY OFFICE BLDG
L.A. 490 sqm. F.A. 185 sqm.
N. DOMINGO St.
(near Agora Mall & SM Center point)
Minimum Bid Price: P 18,000,000.00

KPI_SJ193 - RESIDENTIAL BLDG
L.A. 250 sqm. F.A. 154.10 sqm.
G. REYES ST., Batong Bato
(near Aurora Blvd/ MRT STN.)
Minimum Bid Price: P 3,000,000.00

SAN JUAN (GREENHILLS)

RYL_SJ003 OFFICE CONDO
F.A. 229.10 sqm.
28/F ATLANTA CONDOMINIUM
Annapolis St. (near Greenhills Shopping Center)
Min Bid Price: P 7,200,000.00

TAYTAY, RIZAL

KPI_TAY258 - 27 UNITS RSDL APART BLDG
L.A. 677 sqm. F.A.605.16 sqm.
Leonardo cor. M. Borja St.,
BRGY DOLORES (near Taytay Market)
Minimum Bid Price: P 4,800,000.00

VALENZUELA

PREM_VAL 027 SCHOOL BLDG
MARY MOTHER IMMACULATE SCHOOL
L.A. 5,293 sqm. F.A. 1,689.60 sqm.
Int. MAYSAN ROAD
Min Bid Price: P 33,000,000.00

BAGUIO CITY / BENGUET

CSB_BAG006 COMMERCIAL BLDG
L.A 1,705sqm F.A 1,500sqm
Kilometer 5, TRINIDAD ROAD
Minimum Bid Price: P37,823,947.50

BATANGAS

ANC_BAT 009 COMMERCIAL LOT
L.A. 2,594 sqm. (near COMMERCIAL AREA)
Trapiche Road, TANAUAN
Min. Bid Price: P 7,000,000.00

CCL_BAT011 AGRI/RSDL LOT
L.A. 22,360 sqm. (along National Hi-way)
BRGY POOK, TAAL
Min. Bid Price: P 8,944,000.00

EWB_BAT010 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 10,389 sqm. (near Lipa Robinsons)
LIPA IBAAN ROAD, Bo. Sampaguita, Lipa City
Min. Bid Price: P 7,272,300.00

KPI_BAT269 - RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 10,000 sqm. (near Robinson Lipa)
BRGY AMILAO
Minimum Bid Price: P 3,000,000.00

KPI_BAT233 - 3-STORY SCHOOL BLDG.
L.A. 1,113 sqm. F.A. 2,473.82 sqm.
(Inside Tanauan Town Proper)
Brgy 2 Poblacion, TANAUAN
Minimum Bid Price: P 13,000,000.00

LDB_BAT001 RSDL/AGRI LOT
L.A. 16,000 sqm. (near Capitol)
Brgy. Bolbok, LIPA CITY
Min. Bid Price: P5,120,000.00

BATAAN

WBI_BTN002 AGRILOT
L.A. 156,554sqm
Bo. Mamala, LIMAY
Min Bid Price: P 15,655,400.00

BULACAN

EWB_BUL012 INDUSTRIAL LOT
L.A. 39,811 sqm.
(near Sta. Maria Church)
STA. MARIA INDUSTRIAL PARK
Brgy Balasing, Sta. Maria
Min. Bid Price: P 99,527,500.00

WBI_BUL005 RSDL LOT w/ BLDG
L.A. 1000 sqm. (near Bocaue exit)
Bagbaguin, STA. MARIA
Min. Bid Price: P5,500,000.00

CAVITE

ATB_CVT033 WAREHOUSE
L.A. 7,637 sqm. F.A. 1,050 sqm.
A. Soriano Highway, Bgy. Sahod Ulan
TANZA (near Shell Gas Station)
Min. Bid Price: P 11,000,000.00

CSB_CVT009 RAW LAND
L.A. 18,611 sqm.
(near Metroplolitan Terrace)
Along Brgy. Rd., De Ocampo
TRECE MARTIREZ
Min. Bid Price: P 13,472,265.80

JAP_CVT013 COMMERCIAL LOT
L.A. 1,519 sqm. (near SM/ Robinson)
Along General Aguinaldo Hi-way
GOVERNOR'S DRIVE., Dasmariñas
Min. Bid Price: P20,500,000.00

JAP_CVT014 COFFEE PLANTATION
L.A. 85,000 sqm.
Amadeo Hi-way, Bo. Banay Banay
AMADEO
Min. Bid Price: P44,000,000.00

JAP_CVT015 INDUSTRIAL LOT
L.A. 2,927/ 502 sqm.
(before Gateway Industrial Park)
Bo. Biclatan, GEN. TRIAS
Min. Bid Price: P14,500,000.00

LDB_CVT002 SCHOOL BLDG
L.A. 2,810 sqm. F.A. 3,583 sqm.
(near Cavite State Colleges)
Dalahican, NOVELETA
Min. Bid Price: P17,280,000.00

ISABELA

ATB_ISA04 5-STRY COMMERCIAL BLDG
L.A. 853 sqm. F.A. 171.90 sqm.
(infront Shell Gas Station)
CITY ROAD POBLACION, Santiago City
Min. Bid Price: P 10,000,000.00

LAGUNA

EWB_LGN023 AGRI LOT
L.A. 10,680 sqm.
along Km. 101, CAVINTI-LUMBAN RD.
Brgy. Lewin, Lumban (near Caliraya)
Min. Bid Price: P 15,000,000.00

EWB_LGN024 AGRI LOT
L.A. 37,874 sqm. (near Caliraya)
Along Km. 109, CAVINTI-LUMBAN RD.
Brgy. East Talaongan, Cavinti
Min. Bid Price: P 11,500,000.00

LDB_LGN005 COMML LOT w/ IMPRMT
L.A. 4,000 sqm.
(along National Hi-way Bus Terminal)
Brgy. Pagsawitan, STA. CRUZ
Min Bid Price: P25,912,000.00

LDB_LGN007 COMMERCIAL LOT
L.A. 1,440 sqm. (beside La Residencia)
Brgy. Don Jose, STA. ROSA
Min. Bid Price: P17,280,000.00

PREM_LGN 047 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1,366 sqm. F.A. 918 sqm.
(near DPWH)
MONSERATT SUBD. Brgy. Callos
Sto. Angel Norte, Sta. Cruz
Min. Bid Price: P 8,500,000.00

WBI_LGN022 RICELAND (6 titles)
L.A. 20,566sqm. (Along National Hi-way)
BULILAN NORTE/ SUR, PILA
Min. Bid Price: 23,138,000.00

WBI_LGN011 POULTRY FARM
L.A. 10,001sqm. (Beside Town Proper)
PAGALANGAN, Victoria
Min Bid Price: P 8,150,000.00

PAMPANGA

ASB_PAM016 COMMERCIAL LOT
L.A. 500 sqm.
Magsaysay Drive, OLONGAPO CITY
Min Bid Price: P 10,000,000.00

QUEZON PROVINCE

ESB_QP007 COMMERCIAL LOT
L.A. 4,447 sqm.
(near Municipal Hall of Tiaong)
National Road cor. VILLA PLANTACION DRIVE
Brgy. Lumingon, Tiaong
Min. Bid Price: P 8,894,000.00

LDB_QPR010 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 25,000 (Near Tiaong Municipal Hall)
Brgy. Lusacan, TIAONG
Min Bid Price: P10,000,000.00

MEGA TAGAYTAY

TPFP_BAT006 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 200 sqm. F.A. 135 sqm.
CANYON WOODS RESIDENTIAL RESORT
Min Bid Price: P 4,950,000.00

MU_BAT001 VACANT RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 735 sqm. (near Canyon Woods)
GEORGETOWN VACATION ESTATE
Talisay, Batangas City
MIN. BID PRICE: P5,880,000.00

ILOILO

KPI_ILO185 - COMMERCIAL LOT
L.A. 914 sqm. (near Imperial Plaza)
Corner MUELLE LONEY ST., Jaro
Minimum Bid Price: P 11,000,000.00

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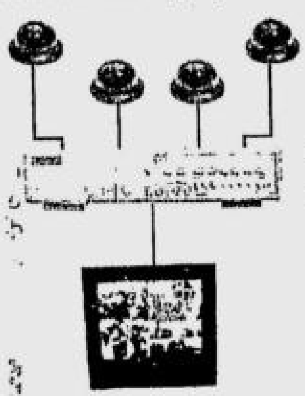

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Batasan 5: Where's the mass base?

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

THE COMMUNISTS (THEY NOW BRAND themselves progressives) have long bragged about their so-called mass base. Touting themselves as the defenders of the downtrodden, champions of the poor, and relentless fighters against injustice, they have claimed strong and wide support from the masses.

Even when the communist world has crumbled around them, they continue to insist that they have the magic formula to transform our country into their version of paradise on earth.

The existence of the communist mass base seemed to have been validated when front organizations like Bayan Muna, Anakpawis, Akbayan and Gabriela resoundingly won seats in Congress as party-list representatives. Satur Ocampo's Bayan Muna topped the party-list elections with over a million votes from around the country.

Now, to the Batasan 5, I now pose these questions: Where is the mass base? Where are the millions who voted for you in the 2003 party-list elections?

Instead of acting like true revolutionaries, and daring the police to arrest them on rebellion charges, of which they proclaimed they were innocent, the gallant Batasan 5 hightailed it to the protective custody of the House of Representatives. There, they spent taxpayers' money on board and lodging. The Batasan 5 have given revolutionaries a bad name.

One would think that the masses would storm Congress to set the Batasan 5 free. I suspect they tried to rally their supporters. They staged several press conferences, as they are wont to do. They proclaimed their innocence to rebellion charges and demanded due process. But hardly anybody was apparently watching. And for 70 days, nobody, but nobody, came to their rescue.

When finally the Batasan 5 came out into the sun, only 1,000 people trudged with them to UP. I watched the TV coverage for a couple of minutes. Most of the marchers looked like students cutting classes, probably from the UP political science department.

There were the recycled red banners carried by the usual hacks, probably paid at P200 per head. The communists haven't learned that their red banners scare people away.

The marchers made a ploy for the support of the labor unions by calling for a raise in minimum wages, and of the government workers by supporting a demand for increased salaries. But nothing worked.

The Batasan 5 called it a victory march. But, it was clear that the communists no longer present a massive and solid front. It was a sparse crowd. And, conspicuous by their absence were well-known stalwarts like Etta Rosales of Akbayan and Baraquiel of Gabriela. Even Randy David and his bosom buddy Llamas were not there.

The Batasan 5 have insisted the government could prove them guilty of rebellion. Then, they should face them court, instead of pleading their case on TV.

Like all Maoists, the Batasan 5 will claim that their party-list organizations are completely apart from the armed rebellion the New People's Army has waged for over 30 years. The Department of Justice will have to break this long-standing myth.

But I agree with the Batasan 5 that they are entitled to the full protection of the rule of law, even as they flaunt it. The Department of Justice must nail them down under our system of justice, not under the kangaroo courts of the communists. We should prove to the Batasan 5 and all the other local communists that our democracy can defend itself with its own rules.

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BIR clarifies VAT status of airlines, shipping firms

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE IS set to issue circular clarifying the VAT liabilities of shipping and airline firms, in a bid to address confusion over their tax status following the implementation of the Reformed VAT Law (RVAT).

The BIR said the franchise tax had been removed since the imposition of the VAT on sea and air carriers. The RVAT law contains a provision stating that VAT should be imposed in lieu of the franchise tax.

The 12-percent VAT is imposed every time domestic sea and air carriers transport passengers, goods and cargoes from one place in the Philippines to another place within the country, the BIR said.

But domestic air and sea carriers are imposed a zero VAT rate every time they transport passengers, goods and cargoes from the Philippines to another country, the BIR added.

Under a zero-VAT rating, the 12-percent VAT is not imposed on the concerned business operation, and the taxpayer is allowed to refund input VAT credits. Input VAT is the amount of VAT shouldered by the taxpayer every time it purchases a product or a service whose price already includes the 12 percent VAT.

While domestic shipping and airline firms are subject to VAT, the BIR said in its draft circular that international air and sea carriers are exempted from the VAT but are subject to the 3-percent tax on their gross receipts.

The BIR said international carriers were not allowed to shift from the percentage tax to the VAT system.

The revenue agency said importation of fuel by sea and air transport firms were exempted from VAT as long as the fuel was intended for the transport of passengers or goods from a place in the Philippines to other countries. Otherwise, sea and air transport firms should pay the VAT on fuel.

The BIR has posted the draft RMCs on its website and is in the process of gathering comments from the shipping and airline industries.

The BIR said the RMC would address the confusion as to what specific operations of air and sea transport firms are subject to the 12 percent VAT.

The RVAT Law took effect last November. It expanded the coverage of the value-added tax since Nov. 1 and has raised the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent since Feb. 1.

The RVAT is considered the main fiscal reform measure of the Arroyo administration, which expects to collect P75 billion in additional tax collection this year alone out of the new law.

Exporters want tariffs on banana chips lowered

Firms blame 167% increase in tariffs in China for volume slowdown

By Christine A. Gaylican

EXPORTERS OF BANANA CHIPS have renewed their appeal for the government to convince China to bring down its high tariffs on banana chips, on grounds that these reduced export volumes last year.

The import tariffs on banana chips increased last year by 167 percent in the provinces of Guangdong and Huangfu, from 7.5 renminbi per kilogram to 20 renminbi, leading to a slowdown in shipments since January 2005.

"We are again appealing to the Department of Agriculture and Department of Trade and Industry to assist us in dealing with Chinese authorities regarding this matter," industry president Ruben See told the INQUIRER.

China absorbs 20 percent of Philippine banana chip exports, See said.

The export of banana chips is one of the emerging export winners of the Philippines and earnings in 2004 amounted to $36 million, industry data showed.

See said there were no available figures yet for 2005, although he expected the earnings to be lower.

See noted that the low export deliveries to Guagdong and Huangfu had also pulled down the farm gate price of Cardaba or saba bananas to P2 a kilo from as much as P4.80 a kilogram.

The Philippine Trade and Investment Center in Guagdong-China has already taken note of the customs valuation issue and has said that a top-level Philippines-China government-to-government negotiation through formal bilateral channels would be the final solution, he added.

The Southern Mindanao banana industry council said in a letter to the DA and the DTI that they should "officially raise to the Chinese government the issue of higher customs valuation of banana chips as an urgent concern that restricts existing bilateral trade relationships and to negotiate a mutually acceptable valuation rate."

The group also noted that the DA and DTI could also raise the option of including the Philippine banana chip exports on the list of commodities with lower tariffs of the Asean-China Economic Cooperation Agreement.

Aside from China, other export markets include the European Union, United States, Canada, Japan, Middle East and South Korea.

According to Southern Mindanao Banana Industry Council chairperson Rolando Denila, 80 percent of the country's total exports came from provinces such as North Cotabato and Davao del Norte where 26 banana chip processing plants are located.

ARMM to allow tax-free oil imports in ecozone to bring in investments

POLLOC PORT, MAGUINDANAO—THE Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) will allow the tax free importation of petroleum products by qualified trade concessionaires into its Economic Zone.

Secretary Ishak Veloso Mastura of the ARMM's Department of Trade and Industry said Gov. Zaldy Uy Ampatuan had issued the revised implementing guidelines of the EcoZone's charter to include a renewable five-month tariff moratorium on imported oil products.

Mastura said the proposed suspension of tariffs on direct oil imports was consistent with the decision of President Macapagal-Arroyo to reduce tariff rates on imported oil products.

Mastura said the region's moratorium on oil tariffs would be tested by a Muslim consortium, headed by former Sulu Gov. Abdul Sakur Tan, a dealer of Caltex Philippines.

The secretary, however, clarified that cheaper oil prices would only be made available within the EcoZone.

He said Ampatuan's administration had put in place safety mechanisms, such as transparent public bidding for the EcoZone's trading concessions, to ensure that the legislation would not be abused.

"This is now our answer to frequently asked question on what ARMM can offer that investors could not get from other regions," Ampatuan said.

With additional economic packages to generate fresh enthusiasm for long-term investments, Ampatuan expects a growth in the region's economic performance.

Ampatuan reported an increase of P146 million in trade and investments in ARMM, with Tawi-Tawi, Maguindanao and Marawi City as principal contributors.

This puts the region's economy closer to its ideal contribution of 4 percent to GNP.

Aside from the removal of tariffs on oil imports, ARMM EcoZone's economic packages for investors include a 10-year moratorium on labor strikes as well as duty-free importation of equipment for industrial use by investor groups, Mastura said. *Nash B. Maulana, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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Firm to invest in coal project

By Abigail L. Ho

AMERICAN FIRM HEADWATERS INC. HAS agreed to infuse seed money into local firm H&WB Corp. to jumpstart its $2.8-billion coal liquefaction project in the country.

H&WB president Antonio Ver said the seed money would go to the second step in implementing the project, involving preliminary front-end engineering and design, including a final feasibility study and basic engineering works.

This step, he said, would cost around $1.5 million, the bulk of which would be financed by Headwaters.

The US-based firm, through its chair and chief executive Kirk Benson, however, had already expressed its intent to eventually infuse equity into H&WB for the coal hybrid liquefaction project, he said.

Based on the initial evaluation of the project, proven commercial technologies are currently available to convert Philippine coal into transportation fuels and power.

It revealed that the country's low-grade coals, the bulk of which could not be burned and used to fuel coal-fired power plants by themselves, could be transformed into ultra-clean gasoline and diesel using HTIG's clean process, or non-burn technology.

The evaluation study used lignite from Daguma in South Cotabato and Alcala in Cagayan, as well as coal from Semirara Island, all of which were found suitable for the hybrid coal liquefaction process.

The hybrid coal liquefaction process involves two methods of transformation, direct and indirect.

Lignite can be used for the indirect process, while the better-grade sub-bituminous coal can be used in the direct process.

The proposed coal liquefaction facility is expected to yield 50,000 barrels a day of ultra-clean fuels for transportation.

Apart from gasoline, diesel and liquefied petroleum gas, the facility can also generate 67.2 megawatts (MW) of power from the steam generated by the liquefaction plant.

This 67.2 MW of power can be channeled to the grid.

Ver said he spent almost two weeks in the US meeting with officials of Headwaters and those of its subsidiary, Headwaters Technology Innovation Group (HTIG), the owner of the direct coal liquefaction technology, to finalize the terms and conditions of Headwaters' initial funding for the project's Step 2.

He added that meetings were also held with private equity firms, including Riverstone Holdings LLC, in the US and in Tokyo, Japan to secure more funds for the project.

Talks were likewise held with the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, he said.

Upon his return to Manila this week, he said H&WB would finalize its requests for proposals for the supply of Philippine coal as feedstock for the project.

This would pave the way for the forging of fuel supply agreements.

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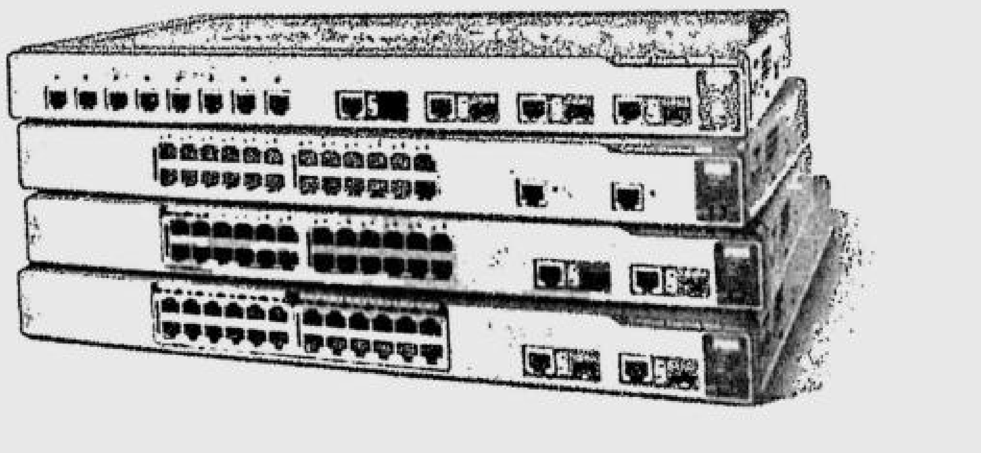

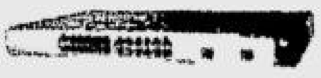

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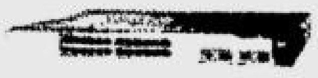

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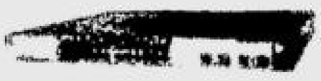

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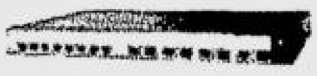

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LBP in talks with lenders for $500M in soft loans

Long-term funds to enable bank to offer lower interest rates

By Doris C. Dumlao

STATE-OWNED LAND BANK OF the Philippines is seeking about $500 million in official development assistance from multilateral and bilateral lenders to boost its capability to offer cheaper loans.

In a recent press briefing, Landbank acting president Gilda Pico said: "We would like to tap long-term funds so we could give lower interest rates to our clients."

She said Landbank would tap these ODAs to become more competitive, like fellow government bank Development Bank of the Philippines which has availed itself of a lot of loans from multilateral lenders.

"We want to help our clients so we are looking for cheaper sources of funds because the costs of deposits are too high now. This will lower our pass-on rates," she said.

Among the big ODA funding being negotiated by Landbank were: $100 million from the World Bank to support strategic local development investments; $113 million from the World Bank in private sector development support for rural development; $150 million from Japan Bank for International Cooperation for agriculture enterprise development, and $100 million from the Asian Development Bank for regional development credit support.

"We have about $500 million in the pipeline. These were included in the ODA program of Neda (National Economic Development Authority)," she said.

The bank expects the ODA loans to be disbursed by the foreign donors late this year or in the first quarter of 2007.

Pico said Landbank, like the rest of the local banks, was feeling the pinch from narrowing interest rate margins.

"The Treasury bill rates have gone down but in order to compete in deposit-taking, interest on deposits went up. This narrowed the spreads between loans and deposit rates so we're trying to get more low-cost deposits," she said.

In the meantime, Landbank is also targeting to unload P2 billion to P3 billion worth of non-performing loans and assets by the year's end as part of its continuing bid to clean up it balance sheet.

As the bank had already disposed of most of its nonperforming loans in the past, Pico said the bank would now focus on unloading its remaining foreclosed assets.

Landbank, the country's fourth biggest bank, posted a net profit of P908 million in the first quarter or 19 percent higher than year-ago level on higher revenues from loans and investments, as well as prudent management of expenses.

Pico said Landbank was thus on track with its net profit target of P3.3 billion for this year.

Landbank has consistently contributed to the national coffers by remitting cash and stock dividends. It also absorbs the administrative cost incurred by the bank in implementing the agrarian reform program using its internally generated funds.

GOINGS-ON

STI to host 11th ICT congress

STI, AN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION technology educational institution, will host the 11th ICT Professionals' Congress, an annual event organized by the Philippine Computer Society (PCS), on June 5 to 7, 2006.

Under a memorandum of agreement signed earlier, PCS named STI a major partner in the design and holding of the congress. STI is a member of PCS, an organization with more than 700 members nationwide.

Founded in 1967, PCS is a premiere organization of IT professionals.

The congress will have the theme "Wireless Nation: Link Up and Live It." Hundreds of IT professionals from both the private and government sectors are expected to join the event.

Chinatrust meets standards

PUBLICLY-LISTED Chinatrust (Philippines) Commercial Bank Corp. becomes one of the first commercial banks to comply with the International Accounting Standards (IAS) as its 2005 audited financial report released recently conformed to the stringent guidelines on transparency and fair reporting of the new accounting standards.

IAS replaces the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) requires domestic banks to adopt the new accounting standards in their year-end 2005 financial statements.

Chinatrust is also taking concrete steps to align its practices with the prescriptions of the Basel II framework within the time frame suggested by the regulators. Basel II prescribes that banks should have enough capital for their risk-taking activities.

UCPB taps TIM

UCPB has tapped Total Information Management Corp. (TIM) to upgrade its business recovery infrastructure in line with continuing efforts to ensure uninterrupted service to customers even if a calamity rendered the main data center at its head office inoperable for a long time.

Using TIM's world-class remote data replication technology, UCPB will be able to speed up the activation of its backup systems in real-time.

TIM's business recovery center will have a mirror image of UCPB's mainframe computing platform. Every transaction data will be captured in real-time in a remote site and only UCPB can access the records. This means that the bank's clients are assured that whatever happens, they can continue to access their accounts, said UCPB first vice president for information technology Edgardo Diama.

TIM is a Filipino-owned IT company established in 1985 as a supplier of re-certified/refurbished and brand-new IBM mainframes and peripheral equipment. Today, it is a leading technology services company providing business recovery and continuity services and a full range of IT solutions for some of the country's largest enterprises.

LRT, MRT report increasing ridership

By Daxim L. Lucas

TWO LRT lines report 18.2-percent increase in passengers

MORE COMMUTERS RODE THE TRAINS OF the Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA) in the first quarter of this year as rising fuel prices made the mass transit system a more practical alternative mode of transport.

According to the LRTA, a total of 40.1 million commuters rode its two train lines during the first three months of 2006. This represents an 18.2-percent increase from the 33.8 million passengers registered in the same period last year.

The state-run service operates two train lines. The first—LRT-1—is a Marcos-era elevated rail service that runs from Baclaran to Monumento. The newer line—LRT-2—runs from Recto to Santolan, Pasig.

The strong growth in LRTA's ridership figures echoes similar results reported the other day by the Metro Rail Transit Corp. which operates from Pasay to North Avenue.

MRT data showed an 11.2-percent increase in ridership to 34.2 million in the first quarter, which officials attribute to fuel price-induced migration by the motoring public.

More importantly, however, the latest data showed the increasing acceptance among the commuting public for the LRT-2 service, which had been suffering from low ridership numbers since its launch a few years ago.

The first quarter data showed a 31-percent increase in commuters taking the LRT-2 to 11.9 million in the first quarter of the year from only 9.1 million passengers in the first three months of 2005.

As a result, LRT-2 collected P159.4 million in revenues for the period from only P121.4 million in the same period of last year.

On top of rising fuel costs, the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) believes that commuters have become more conscious of the value of their time and are, thus, taking the faster rail service instead of driving through traffic in their private vehicles.

"You save more time compared to the time consumed if you take the bus or your own car," Assistant Secretary Roberto R. Castañares said.

The older LRT-1 also reported a more than 14-percent increase in ridership during the period. In the first quarter, it ferried a total of 28.1 million passengers compared to 24.6 million in the same period of last year.

Its revenues for the period rose to P405.9 million from P353.5 million in the first quarter of 2005.

LRTA made P565.3 million in the first quarter of 2006 compared to only P474.9 million in the same period last year, representing a 19-percent increase.

Despite this, the company continues to lose money and is still heavily subsidized by the government.

SM Prime...

From page B4

But Ruperto Cruz, president of the Pinoy Gumising Ka Movement, said the tax perks put "at a disadvantage" the retailers outside Clark, who pay higher taxes.

Cruz said SM Prime was also given the right to manage the nearby Bayanihan Park, a public area. The company has rehabilitated the park, including the road and drainage system there, and maintains it for public use.

Presidential Assistant for Central Luzon Renato Diaz defended SM Prime, saying it was entitled to incentives extended recently through Proclamation 1035.

Signed by President Macapagal-Arroyo in March, the proclamation placed the 33,765-hectare former military base lands in Pampanga and Tarlac, including Clark, as part of the area of the Philippine Economic Zone Authority.

The order made the nearly 400 locators in Clark entitled to incentives.

The proclamation is an interim solution as Congress works out the passage of House Bill 4900, which grants tax amnesty to locators from 1992 up to 2005, and HB 4901, which proposes to amend Republic Act 7227 or the base conversion law to exempt Clark locators from regular taxes, Diaz said.

First Gen expanding generation capacity

By Abigail L. Ho

LOPEZ-OWNED FIRST GEN Corp. is aiming at expanding its installed generating capacity by 1,700 megawatts (MW) in the next five years.

This is to be done either through the expansion of existing facilities or the acquisition of National Power Corp. plants that will be auctioned off.

Peter Garrucho, First Gen vice chair and chief executive, said the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp.'s (PSALM) efforts to privatize Napocor assets presented First Gen with an opportunity to expand its operations.

"It is First Gen's intention to participate in the privatization program and acquire select assets that have the most competitive prices, as well as potential for expansion," he said.

He said First Gen was particularly interested in coal-fired, hydro and geothermal power plants as these were "quite competitive."

Assets that the company was preparing to bid for included the 100-MW Pantabangan and 12-MW Masiway hydropower facilities in Nueva Ecija, as well as the 660-MW Tiwi-MakBan geothermal facilities, he said.

First Gen, he said, had already visited these plants, along with many other facilities. It also had studied data related to them.

"First Gen actively conducted market analysis, due diligence, and investment evaluation of a number of Napocor power plants," he said.

"As the months pass, we expect PSALM to make faster progress in the privatization effort. They have secured the consents of creditors to sell and transfer certain assets, and they have partly responded to calls to help reduce market risk, settle land issues, and improve fuel supply agreements. We hope they make even more progress," he added.

He said that with certain structural changes now taking place in the industry, "it is expected that the long-standing delays to the privatization program will come to an end, with assets up for privatization being sold in 2006 and 2007 under competitive terms."

Apart from bidding for some Napocor plants, he said First Gen was also currently doing studies on how to boost the capacity of its existing gas plants, the 1,000-MW Sta. Rita and the 500-MW San Lorenzo, through the installation of inlet air-cooling technology.

PREPARATIONS FOR 12TH ASEAN SUMMIT

Mandaue City undergoes urban facelift

By Raquel P. Gomez

MANDAUE CITY IN CEBU province, said to be just the "bridge city" connecting highly commercialized cities of Lapu Lapu and Cebu, is currently undergoing a major urban facelift as part of preparations for its hosting of the 12th Asean Summit in December.

Under a major urban renewal program, the city will construct the P250-million Cebu International Convention Center (CICC), which will be the venue of the Asean Summit. It is also planning to develop a 180-hectare reclaimed property fronting Cebu harbor into a key central business district.

New growth center

Envisioned as the next growth center in Cebu, the South Reclamation Area, when fully developed, will have commercial, institutional and tourism hubs, luxury residential enclaves, and a leisure and recreation destination with an esplanade and an amphitheater for shopping, dining and entertainment.

The project, which is one of the largest private reclamation projects in the country, was estimated to cost P90 billion. It will be done by F.F. Cruz & Co. Inc., which is also Mandaue City's joint venture partner in this undertaking. The city's share of the reclaimed area is 30 percent.

Aside from the state-of-the-art convention center, other ongoing developments in the area include the new campus of Cebu Doctors University, the Cebu Boardwalk, which is a multi-use development that features a marina and the Taft IT Zone (a district for IT companies). A call center facility has already been completed in this section.

Jica funding

The proposed Cebu International Trade and Exhibition Center (Citex) has been endorsed by the National Economic Development Authority to Japan International Cooperation Agency for funding.

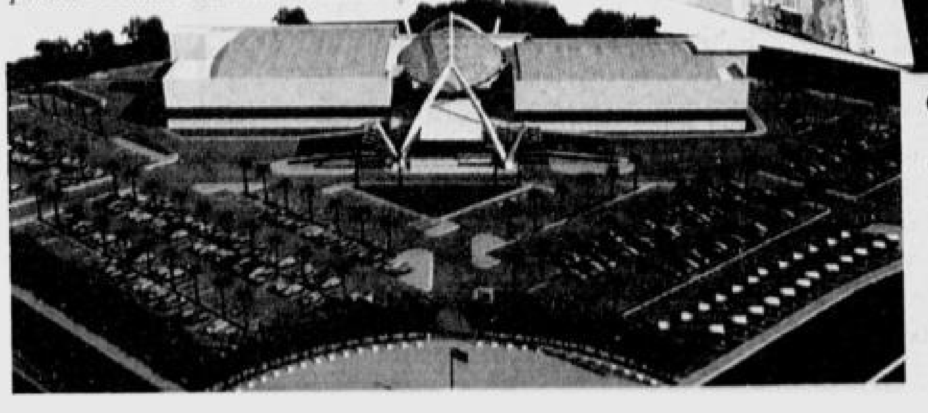
Mandaue City Mayor Teddy Ouano says a number of investors have expressed interest in investing in some projects in the area. A Korean group plans to put up a Korean town within the vicinity of the convention center and another investor plans to put up a mall with a hotel.

"With the scheduled holding of the Asean summit here, the city will definitely be promoted," says Ouano.

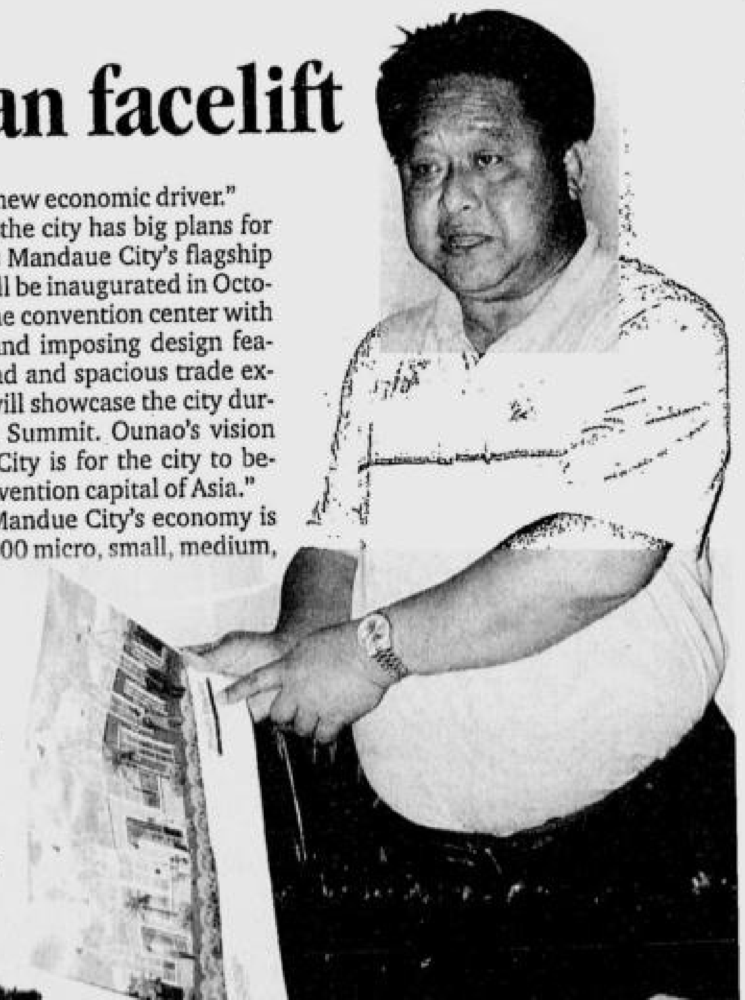
"Finally, people have recognized the potential of this city," says Ouano. "I now foresee this city graduating from being an industrialized area into an important commercial and business district or Cebu's new economic driver."

Ouano says the city has big plans for CICC, which is Mandaue City's flagship project that will be inaugurated in October. For one, the convention center with its elaborate and imposing design featuring a helipad and spacious trade exhibit arenas, will showcase the city during the Asean Summit. Ounao's vision for Mandaue City is for the city to become the "convention capital of Asia."

Currently, Mandue City's economy is driven by 10,000 micro, small, medium, and large enterprises. The city accounts for 40 percent of the total exports in the furniture sector. The city is also home to manufacturing plants of big companies such as San Miguel Corp., Coca-Cola Bottling Co. and Shemberg, the country's number one exporter of carrageenan.



AN ARTIST'S perspective of the Cebu International Convention Center, which is scheduled for completion in October.



OUNAO

US roadshows for property sector launched

PHILIPPINE AMBASSADOR TO THE US Albert del Rosario announced that the embassy in Washington, D.C., together with designated Philippine Consulates, will launch an initial roadshow this May to further promote the country's real estate and property development sector in the American market.

The roadshow will cover Honolulu, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, New York and Washington, D.C.

The participating developers include Ayala Land, Britanny, Burgundy Realty, Cityland Development, Crown Asia, Daiichi Properties, Federal Land, Filinvest Land, Lakeshore Marketing, Landco Pacific, Ledesco Development, Megaworld Int'l, Pacific Concord and Tagaytay Pacific Heights.

Del Rosario said "this program would serve the three-fold purpose of boosting foreign investments, increasing remittance inflows to the Philippines and demonstrating the continuing confidence of the Filipino-American community in our economy and national leadership."

The envoy said enhancing the real estate and property development sector would have a significant multiplier effect on the entire Philippine economy. By tapping the Filipino-American market, this program will further improve the levels of remittance inflows going through the formal channels of the financial system.

Del Rosario said, "our ongoing campaign to increase remittances which President Macapagal-Arroyo had launched in the US resulted in a 31-percent increase in remittances, or 60 percent of total remittances for 2005."

Teves urges UK to invest in RP BOT projects

London mayor asked to encourage British companies

By Michelle V. Remo

FINANCE SECRETARY MARGARito Teves has urged visiting London Mayor Alderman David Brewer to encourage British firms to invest in build-operate-transfer projects in the Philippines.

In a conference last Friday on public-private partnership where Brewer was a guest, Teves noted that the Philippines needed more investors from the private sector, particularly in infrastructure development projects.

Given the Philippine government's fiscal problem, Teves said, it could not immediately comply with the World Bank's recommendation to increase the country's infrastructure spending to at least 5 percent of gross domestic product.

The World Bank has said middle-income countries like the Philippines should increase their infrastructure spending to meet their ideal economic growth.

"However, our fiscal constraints result in infrastructure spending well below this benchmark," he said.

"Consequently, public-private partnerships have become and remain viable options for key infrastructure development," Teves said in a speech during the conference, organized by members of the local business community and the British Embassy.

Currently, infrastructure spending in the Philippines stands at only about 3 percent of the country's GDP.

Teves told Brewer that the Philippines provides an environment suited for government-private sector partnerships, citing the existing Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) Law and the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira).

He said there had already been quite a number of successful infrastructure projects done in partnership between the private sector and the government, as aided by the BOT Law and the Epira.

Teves reported that as of March, the aggregate costs of projects undertaken by the government in tandem with the private sector had reached $19.7 billion.

Of the amount, he said power-related projects accounted for 48.2 percent, while environment-related ones comprised 39.75 percent.

The finance chief likewise told Brewer about the Philippine government's efforts to privatize the assets of the National Power Corp., hoping the British official could bring this news to potential investors from London.

Teves said other investment areas where the Philippine government was looking for private sector partners include toll roads, airports, rural electrification, water supply and rail transport.

To boost efforts in search for private-sector partners in infrastructure development, the government has recently created the Philippine Infrastructure Corp. (PIC), whose main task is to scout for possible investors.

The PIC is likewise mandated to monitor the progress of ongoing BOT projects, and recommend and advocate policy reforms needed to create an environment more conducive for private-sector investment.

The creation of the PIC is in line with the Philippines government's plan to gradually increase public sector spending on infrastructure.

To move the pump-priming plan forward, the government said it was allotting this year 30 percent of the proceeds of the new VAT law for additional infrastructure-related projects.

Brewer's visit to the Philippines came with the ongoing program of the United Kingdom government to seek foreign companies that can help boost intercountry trade.

He delivered a keynote speech on last Friday's opening of the seminar on public-private partnerships.

Like the Philippine government, the UK government also intends to boost cross-country partnership between public and private sectors to for potential investment activities.

The UK government is also in search of foreign companies that can potentially invest in its country.

Brewer, who was deputy president of the Insurance Institute of London prior to his current position, paid a visit to officials of the Philippines Stock Exchange and of the Department of Finance.

Sun Cellular seeks partner in Malaysia, report says

KUALA LUMPUR—PHILIPPINE PHONE FIRM Sun Cellular has approached two Malaysian telecommunications companies in its search for a strategic partner to help grow its business, a Malaysian financial weekly reported.

Sun Cellular, which is owned by Digital Telecommunications Inc., has talked to state-controlled Telekom Malaysia and Malaysia's biggest mobile phone firm, Maxis Communications Bhd, The Edge reported citing unnamed sources.

Telekom's overseas investment arm, Telekom Malaysia International, was considering a proposal from Sun Cellular, the report said.

Digital Telecommunications was not immediately available for comment.

Telekom Malaysia International chief executive officer Yusof Annuar Yaacob and Maxis Communications both declined to comment.

"Sun Cellular is looking for a partner to help it compete and grow its share in the Philippine market, which is dominated by two other players," the report quoted a source as saying.

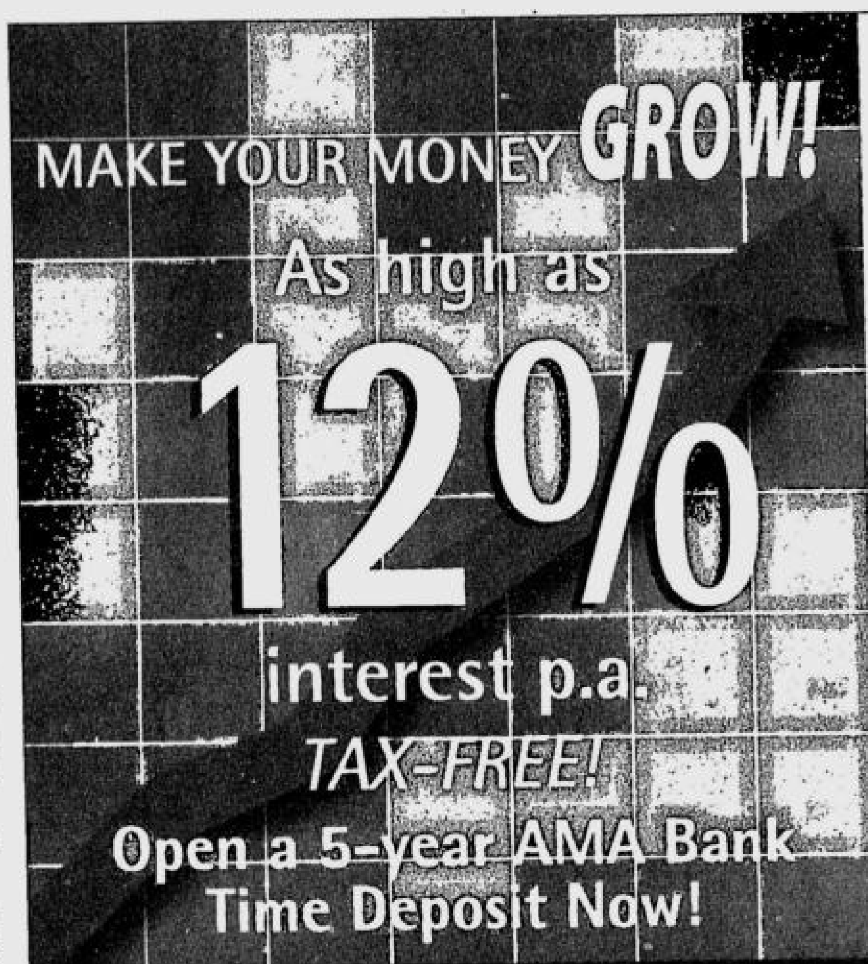
Philippine mobile phone penetration is currently around 38 percent. Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. accounts for around 59 percent of the mobile phone market while Globe Telecom accounts for about 39 percent.

Sun Cellular has a market share of less than 5 percent, the Edge report said.

Sales growth in the Philippine telecommunications market has been slowing, after rapidly adding subscribers over the past six years, and firms have been focusing on cost-cutting and targeted marketing to prop up profits and attract new customers.

Malaysia's Telekom and Maxis are both expanding abroad to densely populated Asian nations such as India and Indonesia, where fewer people own cell phones.

Official data shows Malaysia's mobile penetration should hit 85 percent within four years from 74 percent in 2005. *Reuters*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Gov't not using enough coco-diesel, group says

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—ONLY about 5 percent of government agencies are using coco-diesel (coconut methyl ester or CME) despite an order by President Macapagal-Arroyo for the public sector to use biofuel, an advocate said here recently.

"Some local governments are also not even aware [of Ms Arroyo's Memorandum Circular No. 55]," said Vic Milan of the Kalikasan Vigilante at the end of the government-sponsored Clean Air Caravan that toured seven province starting May 3.

The circular, signed by Ms Arroyo on Feb. 9, 2004, directed "all departments, bureaus, offices and instrumentalities of the government, including government-owned and controlled corporations to incorporate the use of 1 percent by volume CME in their diesel requirements."

It was issued in line with the Department of Energy Act of 1991 (Republic Act 7638) and Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999 (RA 8749).

Josephine Mangila of the Energy and Clean Air Project, a program of the United States Agency for International Development, could not confirm Milan's estimates, saying the Department of Energy has yet to issue a report on the compliance rate.

According to the DOE, CME is made from coconut oil and thus could benefit 3.5 million coconut farmers and 20 million Filipinos dependent on the coconut industry.

Carlos Palad, public information officer of the Chemrez Inc. Philippines, one of two government-accredited coco-diesel manufacturing companies, said "a lot of government offices are still dragging their feet on the use of alternative fuels."

According to the President's circular, CME blended with petroleum diesel fuel "can reduce harmful emissions such as carbon particulates and greenhouse gases thereby improving air quality and at the same time improving the performance of engines."

Citing road trials and other tests, Chemrez said a 1-percent blend of CME could extend a vehicle's mileage by 25 percent.

Palad said the sales of the company's brand, BioActiv, have "rapidly picked up" since August 2005 through tie-ups with retailers.

Flying V now sells the preblend product in 44 stations from just five outlets in 2005.

Flying V earlier disclosed plans to invest in more pumps selling alternative fuels, hoping to increase the share of cocodiesel to as much as 40 percent of total diesel sales this year.

Flying V chair Ramon Villavicencio earlier said biodiesel in 2005 accounted for between 15 and 20 percent of the oil firm's total diesel sales.

Petron, on the other hand, started selling the product in February 2006.

Coco-diesel, Palad said, is beginning to be used in the shipping industry, especially in General Santos City.

BioActiv sells for P71.45 per 500-milliliter bottle.

Palad said the coco-diesel industry continues to be snagged by what he called "resistance coming from the negative view that coconut is inferior, which it is not."

Coco-diesel has registered a "dramatic increase" in sales in Cagayan, Isabela and Nueva Vizcaya, according to the CJ Fernandez Enterprises, the sole distributor in Northern and Central Luzon.

Sales in the three provinces averaged about 2,000 liters monthly, coming largely from operators of cargo trailers, trucks and buses, said Bobilito Bato, the distributor's manager. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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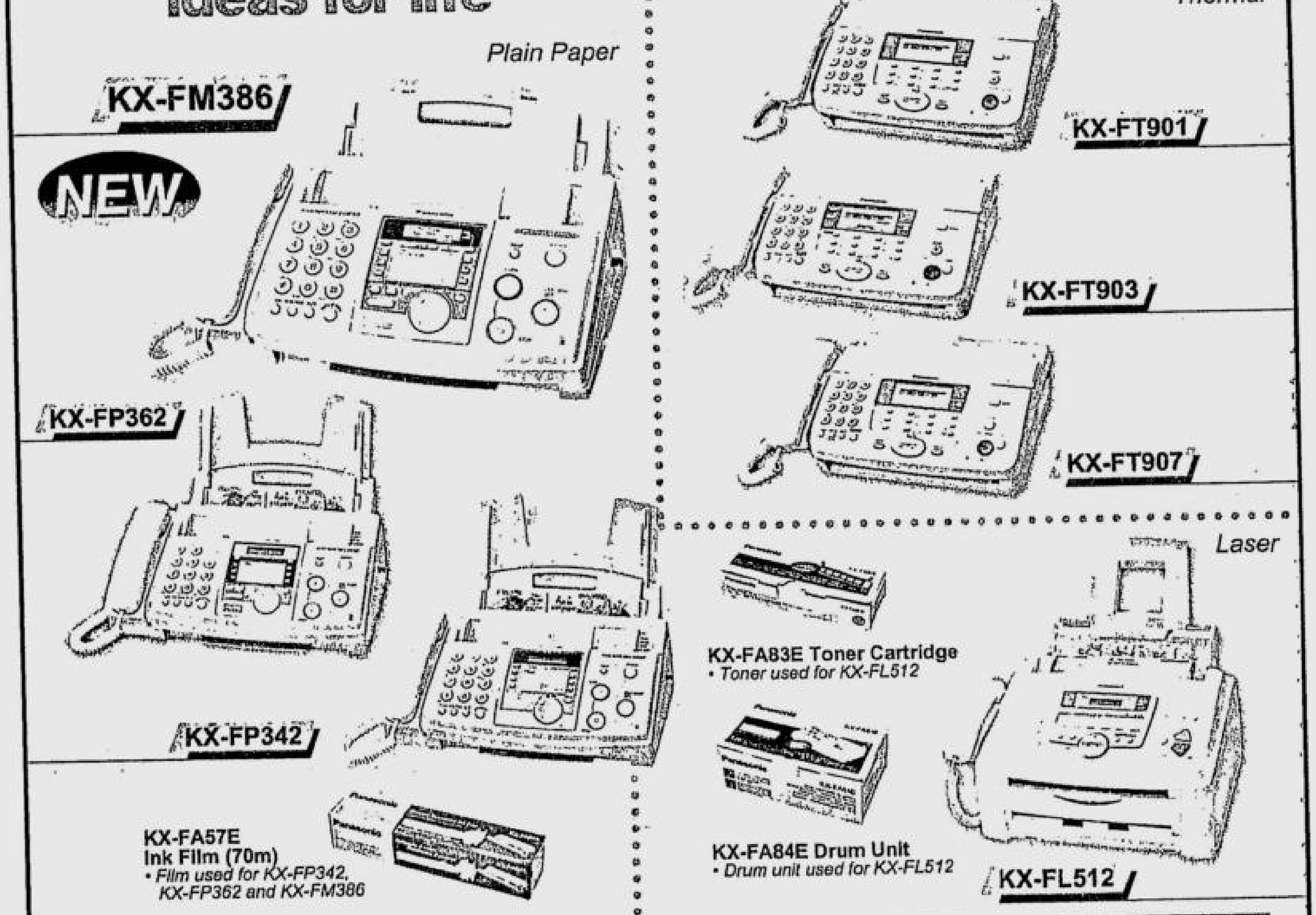

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US consumer mood dips as gas rates bite

CHICAGO—CONSUMER OPTIMISM in the United States buckled in May to its lowest since Hurricane Katrina, a survey showed on Friday, hit by $3 per gallon gasoline, rising mortgage interest rates and a souring political climate.

Earlier, the government offered some positive news on the economy as the US trade deficit narrowed unexpectedly in March based on a surge in export demand—but rising import prices kept alive jitters about inflation.

The University of Michigan's closely watched sentiment survey slumped to 79.0 in May from April's final 87.4, far below the median Wall Street forecast for a reading of 86.1.

"The sharp decline reflects the impact of rising gasoline prices and the low approval ratings of President Bush," said Asha Bangalore, economist at Northern Trust Co.

The report stirred worries that many Americans will stay away from the shopping malls over the next few months as they spend more to fill up their cars—although the link between consumer sentiment and actual spending is often tenuous.

"If sentiment stays at this level—it might even decline further—you should expect a serious slowing in second quarter and third quarter consumption," said Ian Shepherdson, chief US economist with High Frequency Economics.

The Michigan reading was the lowest since 1993, excluding a one-month plunge in October after Hurricane Katrina. Both elements of the report—current conditions and expectations—tumbled based on a survey of about 500 households.

The median inflation expectation also rose, suggesting that respondents were worried about higher prices eroding their financial well-being.

"Job security is holding up reasonably well, but expectations on housing, stocks and gasoline are looking pretty harmful for consumers," said Richard Iley, senior economist, North America, at BNP Paribas in New York. "Underneath the surface, (consumer confidence) is pretty brittle."

The report was consistent with ideas on Wall Street that the Federal Reserve will end its almost two-year run of interest rate increases in June to brace for a slowdown in economic growth from the torrid first-quarter pace.

The housing sector—notable now for stagnant prices and bulging inventories—is likely to lead the way.

Analysts suspect extremely low job approval rates for US President George W. Bush are also eating into confidence. A new Harris Interactive poll on Friday in The Wall Street Journal Online showed Bush's job approval rating fell to a new low of 29 percent from 35 percent in April.

Earlier, the Commerce Department said record high exports pushed the US trade deficit down to $62 billion in March, its lowest since August and a second straight month of narrowing.

Wall Street analysts had expected the gap to widen to about $67 billion on the back of higher oil import volumes.

US exports of $114.7 billion in March included record shipments to Canada, Mexico, the European Union, China and South and Central America. *Reuters*

China sees need to raise key rates anew

BEIJING—CHINA NEEDS TO tighten policy further by raising interest rates again, increasing banks reserve requirements and permitting a more flexible exchange rate, an influential government economist said on Saturday.

The People's Bank of China (PBOC) raised its benchmark one-year lending rate for the first time in 18 months on April 27, to 5.85 percent from 5.58 percent, after annual economic growth accelerated in the first quarter to 10.2 percent.

The central bank also instructed banks to rein in credit, while the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), the top planning agency, reinforced curbs on investment in a clutch of sectors suffering excess capacity.

Ba Shusong, vice head of the financial research institute at the Development Research Center, a think-tank under the State Council, China's cabinet, said the rate rise had had only an announcement effect and no real impact on the economy.

"The measures taken by the government are only a first step. I expect more tightening measures in the future," he told a financial forum.

Ba said the impact of the increase in borrowing costs would be limited because of the growing financing role played by China's capital markets and because big banks are now well capitalized and so are in a good position to lend more.

He said excess liquidity was at the root of all China's economic problems. This had led the PBOC to keep its benchmark one-year deposit rate unchanged at 2.25 percent, in order to deter capital inflows that add to the excess liquidity, even as it raised its lending rate to cool investment.

These two actions were contradictory, Ba argued. The answer, he suggested, was to combine increased interest rates and higher reserve requirements to deter lending with a more flexible exchange rate. *Reuters*

Video game console wars reach climax

LOS ANGELES—AFTER YEARS of promises and high expectations, consumers will finally be able to purchase next-generation video game consoles as the industry's painful transition to the latest technology comes to an end later this year.

In the fall, Sony Corp.'s PlayStation 3 and Nintendo Co.'s Wii systems are expected to join Microsoft Corp.'s Xbox 360 on store shelves—a relief to game publishers who have seen sales plummet as consumers waited in recent months for the latest gear.

But as the hype is replaced by actual gaming systems, the latest "console wars" will enter a new phase, potentially shifting the balance of an industry whose total sales top Hollywood's domestic box office receipts.

During this week's Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles, the big three console makers gave an important glimpse into the future—and further fueled questions about which maker will come up on top.

Will Sony's current dominance continue with its PlayStation 3 or will its high price tag send fans looking elsewhere? Will Microsoft's early release of its Xbox 360 snag it more market share? Or will the intuitive remote control that's offered with Nintendo's Wii prove to be the greatest draw?

On the exhibition floor, at least, Nintendo's sprawling booth appeared to be the hit of the show. Throngs of attendees crowded in lines that snaked around the Los Angeles Convention Center in order to get a first try at Wii games.

But Colin Sebastian, an analyst with Lazard Capital Markets, said he was particularly impressed with the inroads Microsoft has made in an industry Sony dominated with its PlayStation 2. He predicted Microsoft and Sony each grabbing 40 percent of the next-generation market, with Nintendo keeping a strong hold on the remaining 20 percent.

In the more distant future, the video game business will only improve, predicted Doug Lowenstein, president of the Entertainment Software Association, which organizes E3.

"The truth is it's not terribly important how many units of hardware and software are sold in 2006," Lowenstein said. "Don't get me wrong—it is important to individual companies—but it is less important for the industry collectively. The real issue is how this year positions the industry for the future. That is, after all, what transitions are all about."

And in that regard, most see a lot of opportunity. *AP*

A MAN plays the video game Yakuza by Sega while talking on his cell phone at the 2006 Electronic Entertainment Expo at the Los Angeles Convention Center. The next-generation video game consoles are now up for grabs as the industry's painful transition to the latest technology comes to an end. AFP

Saudi Arabia replaces regulator

RIYADH—SAUDI ARABIA ON Friday replaced its chief stock market regulator, who had drawn fire for his handling of a crash that in three months halved the value of the Arab world's largest bourse.

State television announced King Abdullah's decree naming Abdelrahman al-Tuweijri as the new head of the Capital Market Authority.

Tuweijri replaces Jammaz al-Suhaimi, a controversial figure who tried to stamp his authority on a market that is notoriously opaque and volatile. In the process, he found himself at the center of the confidence crisis that has swept the bourse.

Tuweijri, the head of the Supreme Economic Council, a major policymaking body, said restoring confidence would be a priority after a crash that has hammered retail investors, many of whom had borrowed heavily to invest in stocks.

"The decline in blue-chip stocks has caused distress, which has affected millions of citizens," he said on Saudi-owned Al Arabiya television.

"I hope to see organized and balanced trading where the CMA plays its desired role, which inspires confidence."

Turki Fadak, an analyst at the Saudi Economic Association, said Suhaimi's unpopularity in some circles was not the primary reason for the change.

"(The appointment) stems from the desire of the leadership to bring somebody with a solid economic background like Tuweijri," he said.

There was no immediate comment from Suhaimi, who blamed many of the ills of the stock market on the wealthy speculators who dominate the bourse.

His attempts to clean up the market saw him hailed as a reformer in some quarters and vilified for ham-handed tactics in others. *Reuters*

In US, private economic indicators face uphill battle

NEW YORK—SEEKING ACCEPTANCE for vast stores of data is an old game on Wall Street, and more and more companies are touting their information on the US economy as vital to anyone with a dollar to invest.

The latest to join the fray are US payroll giant ADP and credit-card provider MasterCard, which say they provide the sharpest view of employment and the retail sector, respectively.

Both collect huge amounts of data on payrolls and spending trends, and are promoting their reports as reliable previews of government data that are released days later.

But economists have given a somewhat lukewarm reception to this new generation of economic reports.

Given their brief history and sample sizes smaller than those of government figures, analysts say the new data may be useful for those compiling their own forecasts, but may take a while to gain the lofty status attained by such private indicators as the 60-year-old University of Michigan consumer-sentiment survey—the granddaddy of nongovernment economic reports.

Companies such as ADP and MasterCard hope to provide indicators that will reliably preview government economic readings, move financial markets and perhaps command hefty fees from players who seek an information edge. *Reuters*

GM to end production of gas-guzzler

DETROIT—GET READY TO SAY goodbye to the Hummer H1, the hulking, gas-guzzling status symbol that has attracted celebrities and off-road enthusiasts but has drawn the ire of environmentalists.

General Motors Corp. said Friday that the 2006 model year will be the last for the H1, which was based on the military's Humvee.

"It's a reflection of where we're going with the Hummer brand," Hummer general manager Martin Walsh said of the decision. "The Hummer DNA still resides in the Humvee. ... It will always be the core from where we come."

GM expects the last H1s to be built next month.

Walsh said Hummer plans to focus on models with broader appeal instead of the niche-market H1. Since taking over the Hummer name in 2000, GM has introduced the still hefty H2 and a midsize H3 sport utility vehicle. *AP*

A 2006 Hummer H1 Alpha is shown on a dealership lot in Troy, Mich. The 2006 model year will be the last for the Hummer H1. AP

ATM glitch causes woes at world's biggest bank

TOKYO—A COMPUTER SYSTEM glitch caused ATM troubles at the Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ affecting transactions early Saturday.

The trouble began at around 1:17 a.m. (1617 GMT) Saturday rejecting online and ATM transactions, but the glitch has been fixed by around 9 a.m. (2400 GMT), the world's largest bank said in a statement.

It said that a hard-disk trouble of the company's host computer may have caused the problem, but the company is still investigating.

Kyodo News agency said that the trouble affected some 21,000 ATMs—2,000 at bank branches and 19,000 installed at convenience stores—and the bank received about 3,600 reports in which users said they were unable to withdraw cash.

The bank debuted in January as the world's biggest bank by assets, following the merger between Mitsubishi Tokyo Financial Group Inc. and UFJ Holdings Inc.

Last week, the bank announced that it would invest some 180 million dollars in the Bank of China, becoming the first Japanese bank to take a share in a Chinese counterpart, a report said on Saturday.

The Bank of Tokyo Mitsubishi UFJ will take the Chinese bank's shares when the Bank of China lists in Hong Kong next month, the Asahi Shimbun said, without citing its sources.

Tokyo Mitsubishi will take less than one percent of the Bank of China. It also hopes to form operational tie ups with the Chinese bank, the Asahi said. *AP, AFP*

US to extend oversight of Microsoft until late '09

WASHINGTON—CITING MICROSOFT Corp.'s lapses under a landmark antitrust settlement, the Justice Department last week said that it wants to extend by two years its oversight of some of the company's business practices until at least November 2009.

Microsoft has already agreed to the lengthier scrutiny by the department and 17 states under a proposal that still must be approved by a US judge. The company has struggled with a key provision in the 2002 antitrust settlement requiring it to disclose to its competitors sensitive details about some of its software.

Government lawyers said they were prepared to extend oversight of Microsoft's business activities through 2012 if they deem it necessary.

In court papers filed last week, they described Microsoft's efforts under parts of the settlement as "disappointing" and "not very encouraging," but they also said Microsoft's failures were neither willful nor systematic.

If the longer term is eventually approved by the judge, the US court battle against Microsoft would stretch to at least 11 years—the age of a middle-schooler—before it concludes.

During that period, Microsoft will have sold at least five generations of its flagship Windows software. At the same time, Google Inc. has emerged as one of Microsoft's biggest rivals, iPods and Blackberries have revolutionized portable gadgets and technology executives have made and lost billions.

Lawyers said there was little chance US District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly would reject the proposed extension because she has expressed concerns in recent years about Microsoft complying with that part of the settlement, which she has described as among its most important requirements.

Microsoft's top lawyer, Brad Smith, said the extension was "an important step" and gives the company time to finish technical documents that describe the inner workings of its software.

Government lawyers said Microsoft's earlier efforts were so dismal even the company agreed it needed to "reset" the program.

The top Justice Department lawyer on the case promised the government will vigorously enforce the antitrust settlement. *AP*

Bausch & Lomb shares nosedive as US confirms 16 more cases of infection

CHICAGO—US HEALTH OFFICIALS have now confirmed 16 more cases of a rare fungal infection that prompted Bausch & Lomb Inc. to halt sales of a product and sent its shares into a nosedive.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said on Friday it has confirmed a total of 122 cases of Fusarium keratitis, an infection of the cornea that can cause blindness and eye loss. That's up from 106 confirmed cases earlier this week.

Bausch & Lomb last month recalled its ReNu with MoistureLoc brand of contact lens solution after a large percentage of patients with the infection were found to have used that product.

The CDC didn't say how many of the new cases used a Bausch & Lomb product, but as of May 9, a total of 93 percent of contact lens wearers confirmed with the infection used a ReNu product.

The CDC has been inspecting the company's manufacturing facilities in Greenville, South Carolina.

So far, neither the US Food and Drug Administration nor the CDC has established a clear link between Bausch products and the Fusarium outbreak. Reuters

US inflation turns from bad to worse with falling dollar

WASHINGTON—EVEN THOUGH US IMPORT prices, excluding pumped up energy costs, were almost flat last month, experts warn policy-makers not to ignore the inflationary impact of a falling dollar.

The dollar has fallen 6 percent against a basket of the world's "major" currencies since March, according to a Federal Reserve index monitoring the dollar against the euro, yen, sterling plus Canadian, Swiss, Australian and Swedish units.

The dollar had risen against most freely traded currencies through much of 2005 as the Fed steadily nudged up interest rates, but lost steam as the year ebbed. And analysts say the dollar now looks set to resume its steep decline of the 2002-2004 period—when it lost some 30 percent during those years.

On the Fed's "major currency" index, it is now less than one percent from its lowest point in the post-1973 floating exchange rate period. That low was in April 1995, and one which prompted concerted central bank intervention from the Group of Seven industrial powers to lift the sliding greenback.

The dollar has also fallen some 4 percent since the start of April against the Fed's broadest basket of currencies of America's biggest trading partners, including China and emerging Asia.

But, although the dollar's impact on import prices has been remarkably muted in recent years, some economists say this benign period of low, so-called "pass-through" may be ending.

"Further significant dollar weakness at this juncture likely would escalate both inflation expectations and, courtesy of rising import prices, inflation itself," said Richard Berner, chief US economist at Morgan Stanley. That would mean the Fed still has more work to do."

Berner was referring to speculation the Fed may pause in its long campaign of rate rises after hiking its benchmark rate a quarter percentage point to 5 percent last week.

Economists have marveled for years at the relatively muted impact of recent currency fluctuations on industrial countries' import prices and consumer inflation over the past decade.

Traditionally a falling dollar would boost the dollar price of imports from Europe or Japan, for example, as firms adjusted final prices to reflect exchange rate movements.

The hefty share of imports in most US consumer goods baskets would then mean this tended to lift overall inflation.

But globalization of production, fierce competition for market share in the consumer-driven US economy and the entrenched credibility of monetary policy have all been cited as factors that have muted the pass-through of currency shifts to the final price of goods in the shops.

Fed research papers released in January concluded that a 10-percent drop in the local currency would have increased import prices by nearly 7 percent on average in the late 1980s but only 4 percent in the past 15 years.

Fed Chair Ben Bernanke seems to subscribe to this view, economists said, as well as believing explosive commodity price rises—where industrial metals have doubled in price over the past year alone—are of little worry to final inflation.

"We disagree with that view," said Dean Maki, chief US economist at Barclays Capital. "This is a very different environment than that seen in recent years." *Reuters*

OFW . . .

From page B1

seas workers resulting in a better capture of OFW remittances," Tetangco said.

The bulk of foreign exchange remittances continued to come from the United States, Saudi Arabia, Italy, Japan, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates and Singapore.

The continued deployment of Filipino workers abroad also helped sustain the level of remittances during the quarter, Tetangco said.

He cited data from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration showing that the total number of workers deployed abroad rose to 267,985 in the first quarter from 266,931 in the comparable quarter last year.

The number of sea-based workers increased by 10.8 percent to 68,320, offsetting the 2.7-percent decline in the total number of deployed land-based workers to 199,665.

The OFW remittance level is now regarded as a significant economic indicator in the Philippines as the foreign inflows are lifting households out of poverty by boosting funds for education, health and entrepreneurship.

There are about eight million OFWs or about 10 percent of the population.

Bill seeks . . .

From page B1

country primarily because of its resources and vast market, and not because of the fiscal incentives granted by the government.

There are more than a hundred laws granting fiscal incentives. One of these laws is the Omnibus Investments Code, which provides for the granting of incentives to firms identified by the BOI as belonging to priority industries.

Incentives granted by the BOI accounted for bulk of the foregone revenues a year. Of the P282.2 billion in lost potential revenues in 2004, incentives given to firms registered with the BOI and those located in economic zones accounted for P156.25 billion.

Under the proposed bill, there will be only one law granting incentives and these will solely be dedicated to exporters who are credited for helping boost the country's dollar earnings.

While Recto brought up the idea of lifting fiscal incentives, a complementary proposal to abolish the BOI was raised by Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile.

In a recent Senate hearing on economic bills, Enrile said the BOI should no longer exist because the agency had been too focused on giving out incentives instead of wooing foreign businesses through the promotion of the country as an investment site.

The DOF had suggested earlier that the government should come up with a cost-benefit analysis of the incentives granted to businesses belonging to the Investment Priorities Plan (IPP). This would help the government determine what incentives are thrown to waste and therefore should be lifted, and what should be retained, it said.

The IPP is a list of industries that are given fiscal incentives. The IPP list is revised every year.

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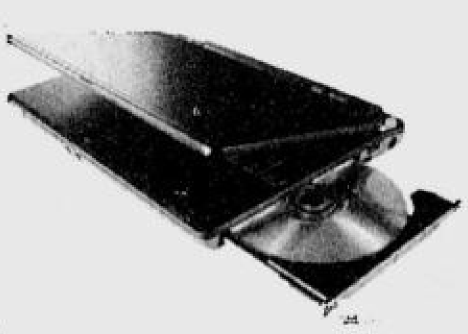

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IPVG, iGames eye RP market. . .

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zalez said the PC titles will be made available through Internet cafés as well as retail outlets. Gonzalez added that they are also mulling electronic means of delivery for some of the PC titles that they will sell in the Philippines, offering them for download to complement the traditional method of selling them in boxes in stores.

Gonzalez said they are now reviewing titles from the entire product lineup of iGames in Singapore. iGames Singapore is the regional distributor of game publishers such as Microsoft Game Studios and Vivendi Universal Games; Brittanica.com; and casual games from Boonty. It also launched World of Warcraft in Singapore in partnership with Blizzard Entertainment.

Gonzalez declined to comment on whether the joint-venture company would also bring in World of Warcraft to the Philippines.

It should be noted that the region's biggest gaming distributor, Singapore-based New Era Group of Companies, earlier announced that it was opening a Philippine office as it was bullish over the PC and console game market in the country. In the Philippines, where bootleg copies of PC and console games abound, the only other authorized distributor of PC titles is Asian Media Development Group, which carries titles from Vivendi Universal Games.

IPVG wants to grow its share of the overall gaming market in the Philippines, while addressing the mostly unmet demands of Filipino gamers for affordable PC titles, Gonzalez said.

While admitting that the prevalence of piracy in the Philippines is still a major challenge, Gonzalez pointed out that the joint-venture company will address this by offering attractive price points and value-added bundles.

"The problem with companies that brought in original PC games in the past was that they approached the market the wrong way. I hate to say it but they were based on what you could call 'First World pricing.' I think affordability was really the main issue behind piracy. If the price disparity is too big, people will always go for pirated games," Gonzalez said.

He added that apart from making the titles more affordable, iGames Asia Interactive would stress the benefits of using original PC games, including product reliability and after-sales support, as well as building a community for Filipino PC gamers. By using original games, they can join tournaments and possibly even get the chance to represent the country abroad.

"We've also seen this in Malaysia [where piracy is also a problem]. The market is also starting to prefer original games because the players can see the benefits of using them," Gonzalez said.

While iGames Asia Interactive will have its own online presence, Gonzalez said the public can expect synergy between the two portals.

He stressed that IP Interactive will remain committed to the free-to-play business model for online games.

"Our focus and vision for our online gaming business will continue to be centered around the free-to-play model. Our company has made a substantial impact on the local gaming industry and we have exceeded our initial expectations on subscriber take-up and adoption of our games. In three months, we have generated an incredible number of active users and concurrent users. We are very focused as a company in continuing to grow our base through the free-to-play model and believe it is a great way to improve the local gaming industry for our gaming community."

RP remains an Internet dial-up market: PLDT

By Erwin Oliva
Contributor

DESPITE THE DROPPING COST of broadband Internet access services in the country, the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) said that many of its Internet subscribers still use the slow dial-up service.

PLDT said that as of March, there were 420,000 subscribers to its PLDT Vibe—an Internet dial-up service—versus 140,000 broadband (both wireless and fixed-line) Internet subscribers.

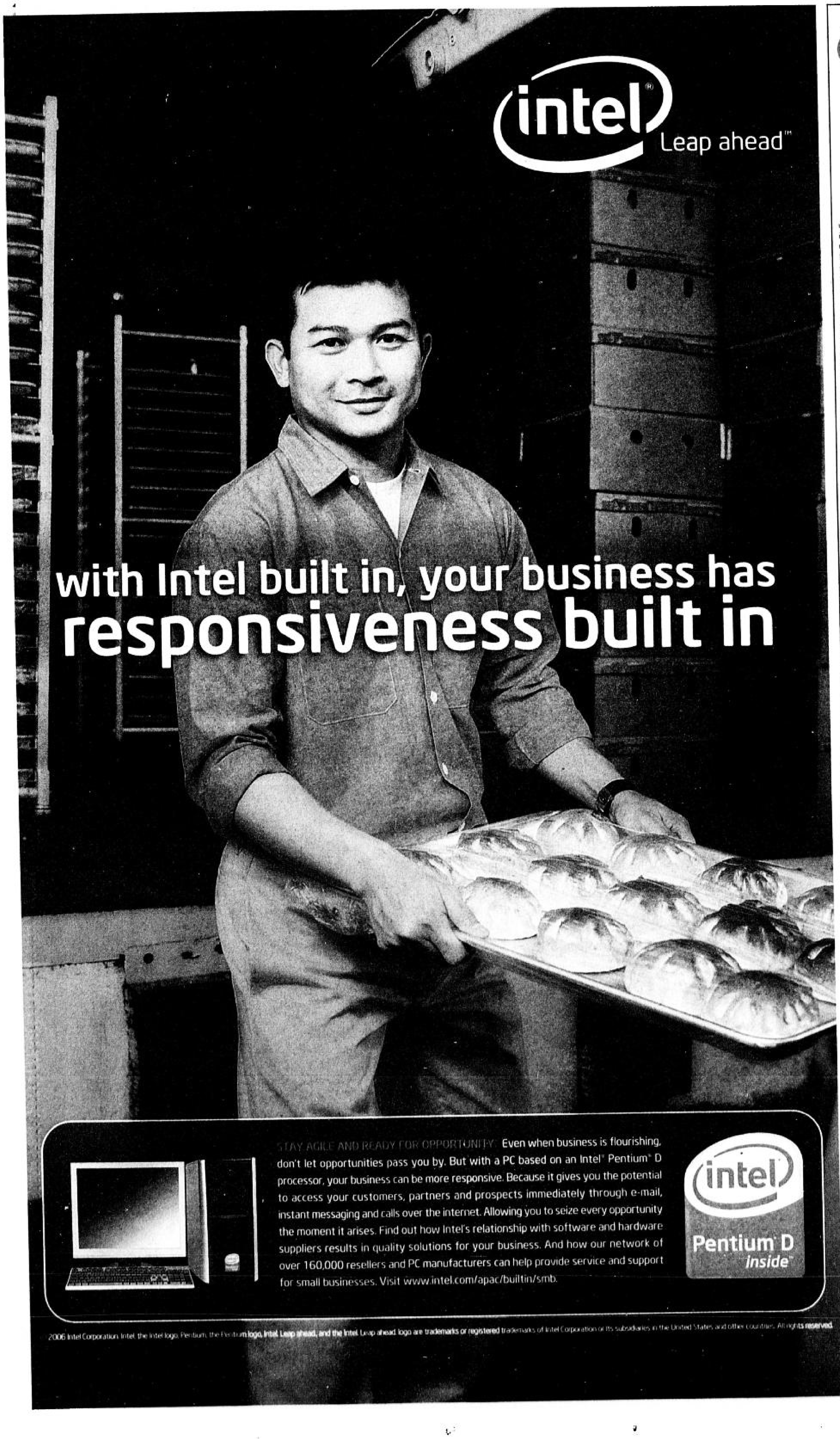
The telephone company is, however, optimistic as it expects to double its broadband subscriber base in 2006, with prices dropping to less than P1,000 a month for DSL service, PLDT figures showed.

"Broadband subscribers are targeted to double in 2006 as both DSL and wireless broadband coverage rapidly expand. Potential market for broadband services include approximately one million dial-up Internet subscribers in the country today," said PLDT and Smart President and CEO Napoleon Nazareno.

Of the 140,000 broadband subscribers of PLDT, 100,000 subscribers are now using the telephone company's DSL service.

During the first quarter of 2005, PLDT said that it had 57,000 broadband subscribers, all using DSL services.

By the third quarter of 2005, 16,000 wireless broadband subscribers and 76,000 fixed broadband subscribers were added, bringing the total to about 92,000. By the last quarter of last year, the total broadband subscriber base was at 114,000.



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Tech Support and Maintenance for SMBs: Prevention and Cure

By Ricky Banaag, Country Manager, Intel Microelectronics Philippines, Inc.

Investment in information technology by small and medium business (SMBs) in Asia is skyrocketing. After weathering the economic downturn, SMBs are now looking to grow their business using information technology (IT), with analysts predicting a remarkable increase of 19% in SMB technology spending in 2004.[1] However, buying hardware is only the first step. The way this technology is managed will greatly affect how profitable the investment will be.

Support and maintenance costs SMBs a great deal of time and money. According to Gartner, the purchase price of a new personal computer (PC) accounts for only 20 to 30 per cent of the total cost of owning that PC, with the rest going to supporting and maintaining this hardware.[2] These support costs rise substantially for older systems, driving up the operational expenses that comprise most of the 70 to 80 per cent of the total cost of owning a computer.[1]

With IT investment surging and system complexity increasing, IT support is crucial to all businesses. System downtime often translates to lost business. So how should an SMB effectively manage its IT system?

The Quick Cure

When you're ill, you usually see a doctor. If you're technology shows symptoms of a glitch, call your "digital doctor" - your IT vendor help desk. Below are some tips to assist the help desk technician assess and fix the problem:

Right problem, right person

The most important element to remember when talking to a helpdesk is patience! Just as your doctor takes time to walk through your symptoms before developing a diagnosis, help desk technicians must also walk through your system's symptoms. Try to be patient as the technician assesses your problem and identifies a solution.

Occasionally, the help desk technician may require a second opinion to accurately pin point the cause of the problem. Just as you would seek the advice of a medical specialist, don't be afraid to ask for assistance from a higher level engineer or manager if needed. It can sometimes save quite a bit of time.

Keep Detailed Logs

Like doctors keep records of your medical history, keep a record each of your technical problems and the solutions offered by the helpdesk. The effort spent documenting problems can help reduce the long-term costs of your system support, as you will know how to resolve these problems if they arise again.

The Preventative Approach

No one likes being ill, which is why the healthcare concept of "prevention" rather than "cure" is growing in popularity. Most people would rather avoid getting sick, rather than visiting a doctor on a regular basis. Adopting a preventative approach also works for technology systems. In the case of technology, prevention starts with good technology planning. Below are a few considerations to help prevent system downtime and reduce maintenance costs.

Regular PC Replacement Program

Regardless of brand, your technology should be current. The optimum lifecycle is three years for a desktop PC and two years for notebooks. Beyond this timeframe, maintenance and upgrades can cost more than replacing the entire PC! It may sound strange, but without scheduling regular updates, companies tend to practice a "crash and burn" approach to IT maintenance. By replacing computers only when they fail, they not only miss out on the productivity gains of more current computers, but they also wind up with dozens of different hardware configurations and out-of-date software, costing more in ongoing maintenance long term. Orchestrating technical support for such a haphazard system will be a full time job, even if you only have a few of these ailing computers.

Q: Why buy the best PC I can afford?

A: A sufficiently powerful, balanced system allows multitasking to operate effectively. For example, PCs equipped with the latest technologies such as the Intel® Pentium® D processor enables users to multitask and process background tasks more efficiently. With two processor cores, a PC can handle more applications or programs at one time. This means, more system maintenance, such as virus software, backup and indexing, can occur while you are doing work, which means less time spent on the phone trying to fix problems.

Because aging computers can't handle complex applications, they can be a huge IT burden. This sidetracks you from your core business responsibilities and increases maintenance overhead, leading to a more complex and costly system. The older the PC, the more costs accumulate. Time, human resources and component parts are required and repairs can be expensive.

Keeping your system simple

Keeping your system simple by standardizing hardware and software can lower the support costs in the long run. Imagine how much time and effort is wasted re-inventing the wheel if you need to trouble-shoot the same problem of your PCs from different manufacturers.

Conclusion

Managing an IT system should be looked at as an opportunity, not a burden. When your system is running smoothly, its benefits cannot be underestimated. A study in the U.S. found that 93% of all companies that lost their data for 10 days or more filed for bankruptcy within one year of the disaster. A full shutdown like this is uncommon. It usually only results when a company does little or nothing to maintain their IT system's integrity. A little downtime can be all the time your competitors need to move in. But with these simple maintenance techniques, you will be ahead of the game.

# # #

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[1] *http://www.amt-partners.com/amt/sections/press/april_2004_top_ten_trends_pr_with_slides.doc, excludes Japan*

[2] *Gartner Research (June 2003) "Linux Desktop TCO An Overview", Gartner, Inc June 19, 2003*

[3] *The Financial Aspects of PC Fleet Management, www.intel.com*

[4] *"Information security- your responsibility as a company director or manager," Australian Business News magazine, June July 2003*

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INVITATION TO A PRE-QUALIFICATION CONFERENCE AND SEALED BIDDING

Interested parties are hereby invited to a **PRE-QUALIFICATION CONFERENCE** and **SEALED BIDDING** for the installation of a **FIBER OPTIC BACKBONE SYSTEM** for BENECO.

The **PRE-QUALIFICATION CONFERENCE** will be held on **May 25, 2006** at **10:00A.M.** at the Punctuality Hall, BENECO Building, DPS Compound, Utility Road, Baguio City where the scopes of work will be discussed.

Prospective bidders must submit their Company Profile; Income Tax Returns and Audited Financial Statements for the past three (3) years; Business Permit; Track Record; Company Registration Certificate and List of Customers.

SEALED BIDS must be received on or before **June 6, 2006 at 10:00A.M.** at the Punctuality Hall, BENECO Building, DPS Compound. Utility Road, Baguio City, **OPENING OF BIDS** will be on the same date, time and venue.

Only those who were present during the Pre-Qualification Conference and who submitted the above-enumerated requirements will be allowed during the Bidding Proper.

BENECO reserves the right to reject any and all bids, waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid most advantageous to the BENECO.

THE PBAC

(PDI – May 15 & 19, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Camarines Norte
Municipality of Talisay

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
INVITATION FOR BIDS

Date: May 2006
ADB Loan No.: 1772-PHI
Contract No.: SP-05-002-01

1. The Republic of the Philippines has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) towards the cost of the **INFRASTRUCTURE FOR RURAL PRODUCTIVITY ENHANCEMENT SECTOR (InfRES) PROJECT** and it is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the Contract for **TRAIL Project (Upgrading/Improvement and Construction of Farm-to-Market Roads Sub-Project)**. Bidding is open to all eligible source countries of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) that:
   (a) are registered with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board to undertake infrastructure projects as a **Medium A** contractor or better, and
   (b) have undertaken within the past 5 years, as the contractor, management contractor or subcontractor, **three (3) road** construction work projects valued at least **Php 11,000,000.00 each for single Medium A contractor** (and within a joint venture).
2. The **Local Government Unit of Talisay, Camarines Norte** invites sealed bids from bidders with the above qualification for the construction and completion of the Works, which includes **9.471 km for the Upgrading/Improvement and Construction of Nine (9) Farm-to-Market Roads Sections. The Contract period is 8 months (240 calendar days).**
3. Bidders may obtain further information from, and inspect and acquire the bidding documents, at the office of the Employer, at:

   Mr. Raul R. Rayos
   Bids and Awards Committee Office
   Senior Citizens Action Center Building
   Talisay 4602, Camarines Norte, Region V (Bicol)
4. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested eligible bidders on submission of a written application to the above office, and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Seven Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (Php 7,500.00).**
5. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form of bank guarantee or other acceptable forms of Bid Security equivalent to Php 450,000.00 and must be delivered to BAC Office Talisay, Cam. Norte on or before 10:00 a.m. of 5th of July 2006 at the Pakrispam Hall, St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Talisay, Cams. Norte. Bids will be opened at 10:00 a.m. on the aforementioned date, in the presence of bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
6. A Pre-bid Conference will be conducted on June 22, 2006 at Pakrispam Hall, St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Talisay, Camarines Norte at 10:00 o'clock in the morning.

   The LGU reserves the right to accept or reject any bids and to cancel the bidding process and reject bid, at any time prior to award of contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligations to inform the affected bidders of the grounds for employer's action

(Sgd.) RAUL R. RAYOS
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - May 15 & 22, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
BATANGAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Rizal St., Batangas City

EXTENDED NOTICE OF SEARCH AND CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

The Board of Regents of the Batangas State University formally and publicly announces that the Search for Presidency of the **BATANGAS STATE UNIVERSITY** is now open. Interested applicants and/or nominees are invited to send their formal applications to the Search Committee chaired by Mr. Richard Albert I. Osmond.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- Must be a Filipino citizen;
- Preferably a holder of a doctoral degree;
- Preferably 35 to 60 years old;
- Must be morally upright;
- With Recognized leadership in his/her profession in the academe or industry;
- With at least five (5) years of managerial/administrative experience.

In addition to the above-mentioned qualifications, the applicants should make a full disclosure of all administrative, criminal, and/or civil cases filed in any court in the Philippines against him/her and are required to submit the following clearances:

- National Bureau of Investigation
- Sandiganbayan
- Civil Service Commission and/or Certificate of No Pending Administrative Case issued by the Administrative Officer of present employer
- Previous Employer
- Not convicted in any administrative or criminal cases

Formal application addressed to the Search Committee should be accompanied with:

- Detailed CV and certified supporting documents
- Proposed vision, Mission and Thrusts of the University
- Results of neuro-psychiatric examination conducted by any government physician or any accredited health institution
- Medical Certificate from a government physician

Interested applicants and/or those nominated for the position are requested to submit four (4) sets of their formal application and certified supporting documents on or before May 31, 2006 to:

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Ortigas Center, Pasig City
Tel. No. (02) 636-1690
Telefax No. (02) 636-1693

OR

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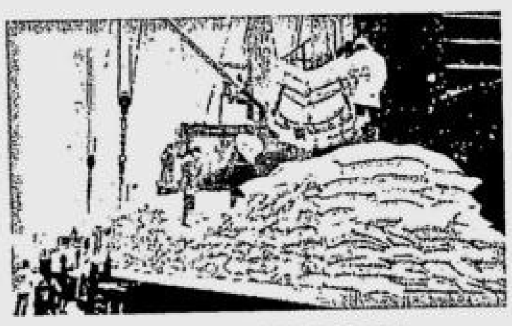

RICE SUPPLY FOR BICOL

The Bicol region is assured of sufficient rice supply even after the lean months as unloading operations of the National Food Authority continue on a 24-hour schedule in Tabaco port in Albay. Since January this year, 11 vessels carrying Vietnam rice have docked the port loaded with more than 1.26 million bags. Based on the latest report, only 2,980 bags have yet to be unloaded. According to NFA regional director Danilo Pastrana, dispersal operations are ongoing as part of preparations for the lean months of July to September. The imported rice will be distributed to the provinces of Albay, Camarines Norte and Sur, Sorsogon and Masbate. They will be eventually released through the agency's accredited retailers and outlets in the region. Supervising the unloading operations are port operations officer Criselda Marbella and quality assurance officer Febby C. Ecalvir.

PAG-IBIG WINS ANVIL AWARD TWICE IN A ROW

Florentino Espana, Vice President, Management Services Group, Pag-IBIG Fund accepts the Anvil trophy for winning the "Tapat sa Pag-IBIG, Tapat sa Kapwa" campaign during the recent 41st Anvil Awards held at the Manila Hotel. The advertising campaign helped promote public awareness on the various services and benefits of being a Pag-IBIG member. It also encouraged members to honor their loan obligations to ensure the continuous flow of funds not only for existing but future members as well. From left: Vic del Fierro incoming President, Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP), Dean Belen Tangco, UST Faculty of Arts and Letters, Sec. Sonny Alvarez, guest of honor, Mr. Espana, Sec. Marietta Goco, and Winston Marbella, outgoing President, PRSP. Dubbed as the "Oscar awards" of advertising, the Pag-IBIG Fund also won the prestigious Anvil last year.

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Peacefully joined our Crator on May 11, 2006 at the age of 90.

His loving wife **Librada (†)**; children and children-in-law, **Ben** and **Ching**; **Teddy (†) & Estela; Rene & Diane; Hector & Baby; Oscar (†) & Mel; Junior & Dolor**; grandchildren **JC, Bobby, Michie, Donna, Ronald, Oly, MJ, Gerald, Tyrone, Ryan, Eric, Christian, Hazel, Christine, Junelle & Olidol**; great grandchildren **Oliboy, Oele Jim, Hasmin, Habi, Chiara**; brothers **Faustino (†), Gregorio (†), Isidoro**; sisters **Margarita (†), Felisa, Soledad (†)**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapel, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on May 16, 2006
at the Loyola Memorial Park,
Marikina City after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

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JOSELITO "Tito" de Leon PALISOC

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Now peacefully rests in the infinite Grace and Goodness of the Lord at the age 54.

His wife **Zeny**, children **Joseph & Golda, Geoffrey, Edmund & Angelica**, granddaughter **Isabel**, brothers, in-laws, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe and will be moved to Christ the King Parish, Green Meadows tomorrow, May 16, 2006 at 12 noon.

Holy Mass will be offered at 8:00 p.m. daily. Interment will be announced.

E-mail: pr_info_tech@inquirer.com.ph

INFOTECH

Editor Leo Magno

Text us your feedback: inquirer it name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

More 3G devices out in the market: survey

By Erwin Oliva
Contributor

MORE THAN 300 THIRD-GENERATION (3G) devices are now out in the market, a recent supplier survey said.

The Global Mobile Suppliers Association (GSA), an international group of wireless technology suppliers, has identified at least 307 3G devices launched by 41 suppliers. That figure, according to the "3G/WCDMA-HSDPA devices—Variety & Availability" survey, represents a 114-percent growth compared to last year's figures starting May 2005.

Most of these devices support the wideband CDMA (WCDMA) standard, which is a standard used by GSM networks.

WCDMA operates on the IMT-2000 international core band spectrum of 1920 to 1980 MHz paired with 2110 to 2170 MHz.

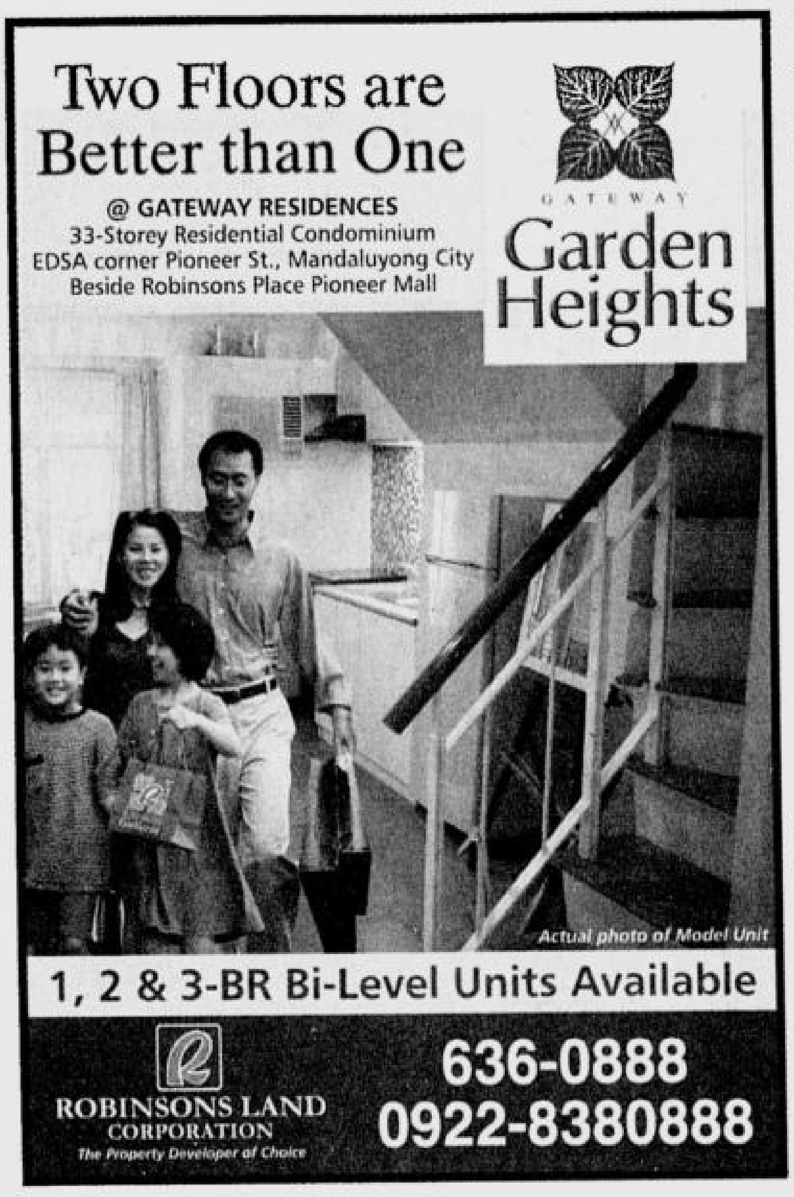
GSA said that a number of operators are now deploying WCDMA in the 850 MHz band, and several more have expressed strong interest in this technology.

Meanwhile, GSA said that EDGE devices have also increased in the market. The group has identified at least 307 GSM/EDGE-enabled devices launched by 46 suppliers.

"This compares with 113 in a survey one year earlier (when there were 21 suppliers) and represents growth of over 170 percent. The new total of 307 includes 60 devices supporting both EDGE and WCDMA, and 31 devices which support EDGE and HSDPA (High Speed Data Packet Access)," the report said.

Earlier this month, GSA said there are 204 GSM/EDGE network deployments in 113 countries, of which 151 EDGE networks in 88 countries have launched commercial services.

At least 67 operators are deploying combined EDGE-WCDMA networks, of which 40 have launched.



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IPVG, iGames eye RP market for PC games

By Joey Alarilla
Contributor

THE NEW JOINT-VENTURE company formed by the Philippines' IPVG Corp. and Singapore-based regional game distributor iGames Asia Pte Ltd. is looking beyond the current dominance of online games in the Philippines as it prepares to launch a number of premiere PC titles in the country.

"Online gaming has gotten all the attention in the Philippines, but most of the people out there are still playing [traditional] PC games," Enrique Gonzalez, managing director of IPVG, told Infotech in a telephone interview.

IPVG's RAN Online is now one of the most popular online games in the country.

Gonzalez is the CEO of IP Interactive, the IPVG subsidiary that publishes free-to-play online games such as Ran Online and O2Jam in the Philippines through the E-games.com.ph portal.

Gonzalez will also sit on the board of directors of iGames Asia Interactive, the joint-venture company which is 70-percent owned by IPVG.

"Unfortunately, I can't disclose which titles we're bringing in, since we're in the process of selecting. We're looking at the complete product lineup of iGames in Singapore, and we're selecting which titles will be right for the Philippine market. What I can tell you, however, is that these are big titles," Gonzalez said.

iGames Asia Interactive is scheduled to hold a press briefing before the end of the month to unveil the PC titles that will be initially launched in the Philippines, with officials from iGames Singapore flying in to the country. Gon-

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IPv6 Enables Technology for Next Generation Solutions

The internet explosion has become an everyday supernova. The Web has become a household fixture. We live in a world driven by information; the internet boom reverberates with constant upgrades, reacting to the unwritten 18-month obsolescence rule. Broadband internet subscribers have grown from 10 million to 100 million over the last three years, and they want unmatched connectivity like never before.

With the number of internet users expanding to astronomical amounts on a monthly basis, one questions how the information superhighway can possibly be able to accommodate it all. Despite all the breakthroughs in technology today, security advancements are lagging, it is more difficult to operate within public and private networks, and connectivity for remote areas is slow and costly. On top of that are the growing trends of peer-to-peer computing, personal webpages and mobile internet. More problems continue to arise as more people continue to go online, because the fact of the matter is that there are only a very limited number of available IP addresses left. How then, are providers of Internet services going to support the increasing amount of subscribers without diminishing the quality of connectivity?

The answer was revealed at PLDT Innolab, during an executive briefing to government officials, technology experts, CTOs and CIOs of various corporations. PLDT, in partnership with Microsoft Phils., Cisco Systems Phils., the Advanced Science and Technology Institute and InfoWeapons, held this exclusive event in order to discuss what is now being pegged as the "Next Generation Internet Technology". The phenomenon backed by all this hype is called IPv6, the latest innovation in Internet Protocol.

Its predecessor, IPv4, was created when there were about 200 nodes on the entire internet. Today, there are about 200 million that exist, and a limited amount of IP addresses left to accommodate them. Although several attempts have been made in order to avoid an overflow of subscribers, this can no longer be contained by IPv4 addresses alone. Lawrence E. Hughes, CTO and Founder of InfoWeapons Corp. and Co-Founder of CipherTrust, said, "I have been working in the IT business for 33 years, and for 33 years, the internet has been running on IPv4 addresses. It's about time we've acknowledged and considered the benefits of incorporating IPv6."

What IPv6 aims to do is support the astronomic growth of the Internet without the present workarounds such as the Network Address Translation.

It has been engineered in such a way that it will integrate itself smoothly into a network that is presently dominated by IPv4. Both will be able to function simultaneously, serving as platforms for internet subscribers to secure hassle-free connectivity.

However, IPv6 also offers much more than just a larger amount of available IP addresses. It also offers better routing and automatic configuration, better security in utilizing data encryption, better audio and video streaming and the ability to send much larger amounts of data at a time. Soon, there will be such a thing as IPTV, and all data services in the future will be able to migrate to IPv6. Because of the copious possibilities that this will bring about, IPv4 will eventually become obsolete. Eric R. Alberto, PLDT SVP and Head of Corporate Business Group said, "We are sitting on a ticking time bomb that is ready to explode in the near future. With the help of IPv6, we at PLDT are ready to enable our subscribers with the technology to transition gracefully into the next generation."

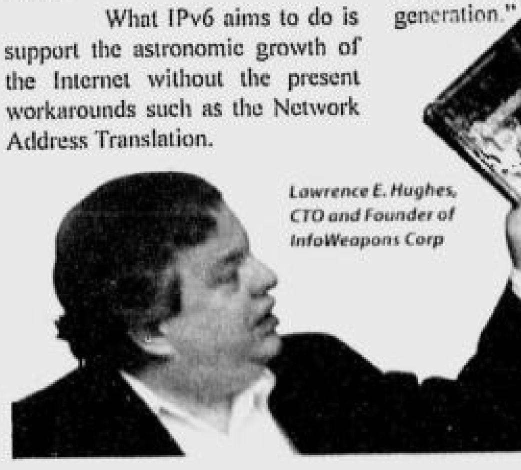
Introducing IPv6 to the Philippines will be of tremendous benefit to the country. It is taking off as a genuinely Asian technology, with main proponent- Japan- at the epicenter of IPv6 development. The very first Asian IPv6 Summit will be held in Manila this coming September. For the Philippines, attaining expertise in IPv6 is a prospect for more investments to be made in the country. Commissioner Damian Domingo Mapa, in his opening speech, said, "Technology is for imperative of progress. The more technology we use, the more competitive and productive we are as a nation."

Indeed, IPv6 has the revolutionary power to allow the Philippines to become an internationally competitive country. Armed with the full support of the government, it will not only be able to merit global recognition, but also aid in the improvements that need to be made within the country itself. Of this, Commissioner Mapa said, "Technology lately has been resurgent in how it can spread the results of its development to the rest of the country. We at CICT are very happy to participate with PLDT's initiative to disseminate information to the nation."

The arrival of IPv6 marks the culmination of combining government, scientific and technological expertise and will yield tremendous results for the Philippines. It is proof that technology truly has the potential to change the lives of every Filipino and take the country into the next generation. Buckle up.

> *"Technology is an imperative for progress. The more technology we use, the more competitive and productive we are as a nation."*

PLDT SVP & Head of Corporate Business Solutions Eric R. Alberto enthuses CTOs and government officials with his testimonial to the benefits of migrating to IPv6



Lawrence E. Hughes, CTO and Founder of InfoWeapons Corp

The Commission on Information and Communications Technology Commissioner Damian Domingo Mapa

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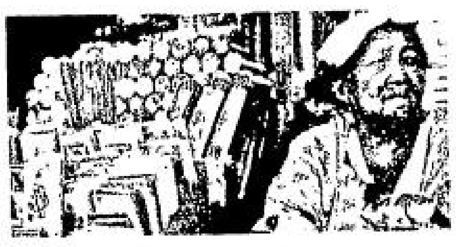
Where ethnic pride spurs trade

In Chinatown, slices of the mainland line its streets



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By Mary Rose Andes, Dianne Dolar, Imelda Llabore, James Lopez and Bernardita Santillan
Contributors

RICKY CARPIO, A KALESA DRIVER, HAS witnessed the growth and development of Manila's Chinatown, after years of steering his horse around its narrow streets.

"There had been many changes in the place, like that building being putting up there," Carpio, 36, said in Filipino, as he pointed to the Alonzo Tower, one of many, now rising in the district. "That would be a new commercial center."

Consisting of seven barangay units, Chinatown has evolved from its ethnic Chinese community roots in the early days of the Spanish era into a bustling modern-day business district.

Gold and jewelry

People visit Chinatown because of the exotic nature of the goods on sale.

Ongpin, Chinatown's major thoroughfare, is known as the 24-karat street because of the numerous gold and jewelry shops that line the way.

Prices of the ornaments range from the most affordable to the outrageously expensive.

The intricate and exotic designs of the jewelry, as well as the other wares, reflect the rich heritage of China—something the Chinese-Filipino people of the district are proud of.

It is this ethnic pride that gives rise to the richness in trade.

"As the population grows, the number of businesses here also increases," said Robert Lee, chair of the League of Barangays, District III in Manila.

Lee said that Ongpin continues to attract Chinese businessmen from the mainland—those bold and enterprising enough to try their luck in the country.

"The majority of the business establishments here are owned by the Chinese or those of Chinese descent," Carpio said in Filipino. "Very few are owned by Filipinos."

But the Filipinos who do get to work there are coping—the same way the Chinese-Filipinos have as they tend to their trade.

"We used to earn more during the 1970s, but now, more businesses have opened, competition has grown, and we now earn less," said Teresita Tee, chair of Barangay 298.

Tee owns a small *carinderia*.

"I earn just enough to sustain my family and meet my dues," Tee said.

Maria Zocimo, 72, is one of the few Filipinos who own a business in Chinatown. She has a small sari-sari store on Mapua Street.

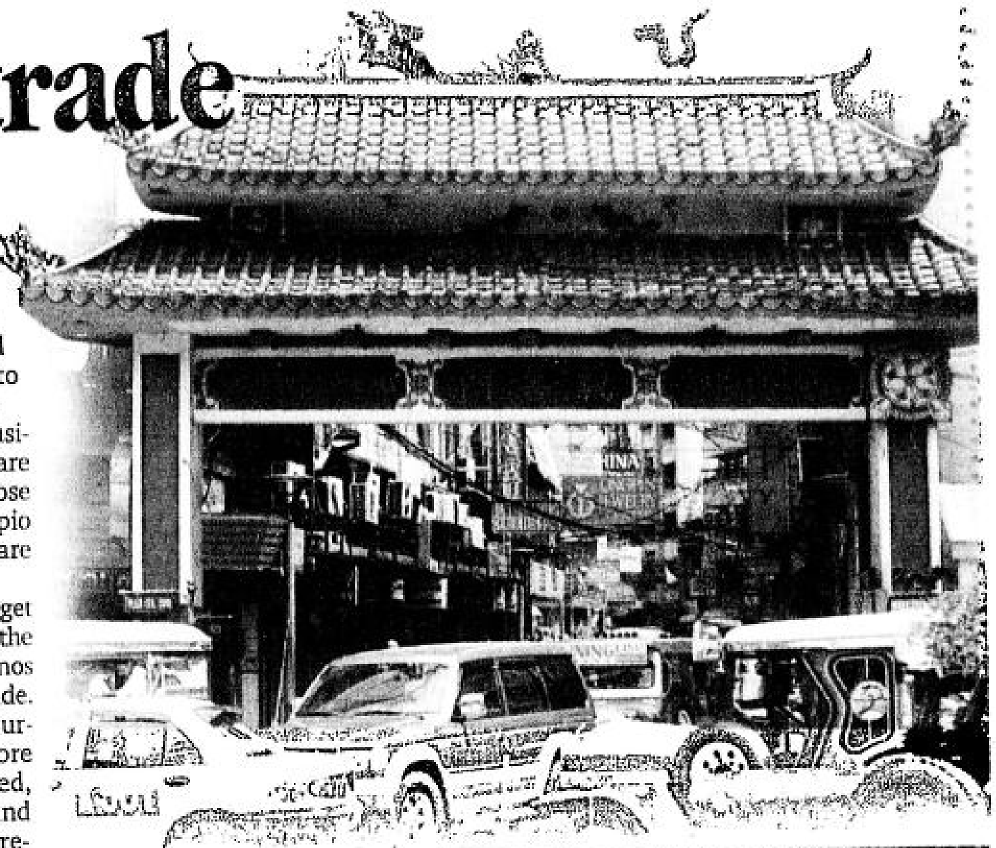
Hope

"My income nowadays is much smaller compared with the previous years," said Zocimo, who has maintained her business in Ongpin for 31 years.

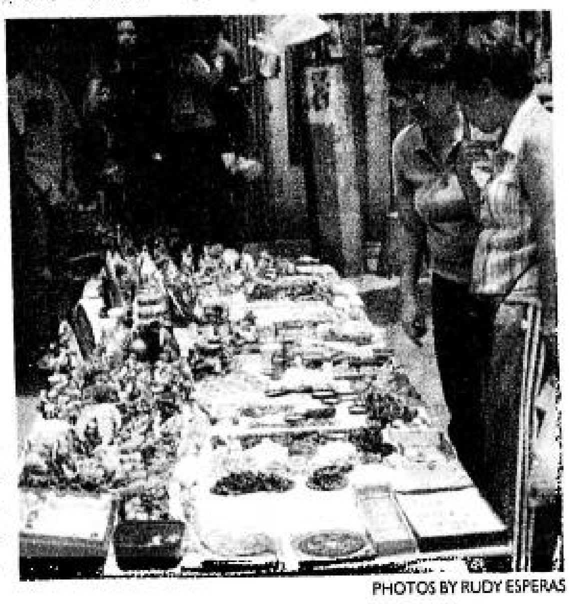
According to Lee, who also owns a business in Ongpin, the prices of commodities have been steadily rising over the years, sometimes outstripping what people are earning.

"People may earn a lot, but their expenses

WHERE/ B2-2



ARCH welcomes visitors to "country" within a country.



TRINKETS promising good luck are a common sight in Chinatown.

PHOTOS BY RUDY ESPERAS

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MOVEMENTS

Mirant has new CEO

MIRANT Corp. has appointed Jose P. Leviste Jr., 61, as chair, president and chief executive officer of Mirant Philippines, and as a senior vice president of Mirant Corp.

"Mr. Leviste brings tremendous experience and expertise to Mirant which will be invaluable in our Philippine business," said Edward R. Muller, chair and chief executive officer of Mirant Corp.

Leviste is a known and respected leader in the Philippines and the international business community. He currently serves as chair of the board of Climax Arimco Mining Corp. (CAMC); chair of the board and chief executive officer, Politstrat International Inc.; chair of the board, Pacific Rim Innovation and Management Exponents (Primex) Inc., and chair of the board of the Philippine Business Leaders Forum (PBLF), the country associate of the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) Corporate Network.

CNBC Asia names new president

JEREMY Pink has been named president and managing director, CNBC Asia.

Pink, who has been interim president, CNBC Asia since January 2006, is based at CNBC Asia headquarters in Singapore.

"Jeremy has done an impressive job as interim president of CNBC Asia," said Mark Hoffman, president, CNBC. "He has already had several successes since January, so making his appointment permanent was an easy decision. Jeremy will continue to play a critical role in negotiating deals that will expand CNBC's reach around the world."

Previously, Pink was vice president, International News and Programming, CNBC, based in New York, where he identified global programming and content opportunities. Pink also was responsible for creating "Worldwide Exchange," the first daily, global business program, seen on CNBC, CNBC Europe and CNBC Asia.

Hilton Cebu Resort announces new GM

PETER Hogh Pedersen has been appointed general manager of Hilton Cebu Resort and Spa.

Pedersen joins the international hospitality chain's first and only Hilton Worldwide Resort in the Philippines, from Hilton Sharks Bay Resort in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, where he was responsible for the entire pre-opening set-up, through launch.

Pedersen has been responsible for the management of the hotel operations at Hilton Sharks Bay Resort since 2001.

At Hilton Sharks Bay Resort, Pedersen was responsible for bringing the resort a Golden Award at the 2004 Mena Travel Awards, and counts exceeding the GOP by 58 percent in 2004 alone, as well as maintaining Revpar growth of 66 percent year-on-year between 2003 and 2004 amongst his achievements at the resort.

A confident personality with a passion for challenge, Pedersen is a result focused individual who values honesty, teamwork and training, has a resilient business attitude while remaining flexible and creative minded.

Etihad appoints RP manager

AS PART of its international development and expansion, Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, has appointed Manuel Staerkle as manager for the Philippines.

Following the launch of the Abu Dhabi-Manila route on Feb. 13, 2006, Staerkle's key responsibility will be to oversee the airline's local activities and ensure growth in this new market.

Staerkle joins the Manila team from his post with Etihad Airways in Jeddah, where he was instrumental in setting up operations for the Saudi Arabian market. Staerkle also brings a wealth of international experience having worked for Swissair in Beijing, Geneva, Taiwan, Shanghai and Madras.

"Etihad Airways is the world's fastest growing airline and I am very excited to be involved at a time when we are experiencing such dynamic growth. Since our inaugural flight in February, demand has been very strong and as a result we hope to increase our frequencies on this route in the future," said Manuel Staerkle.

Acer Philippines appoints new execs

IN A BID to further strengthen its presence in the country, Acer Philippines named new executives to lead its product management and marketing Teams.

Acer Philippines appointed Roselle Mediavillo as the company's Product Manager (Desktops and Servers). This Marketing major and consistent dean's lister from the Assumption College has proven her product management mettle quite extensively, having held key positions in established companies like Phil-Data Business Systems and BiC Phils. In those companies, Mediavillo handled several major responsibilities and consistently performed well beyond expectations.

Agnes Neria-Espino, on the other hand, is Acer's new marketing manager. This Ateneo Graduate School of Business graduate and University of the Philippines university scholar brings to the company her marketing expertise, honed during her stay as the former marketing manager of Microwarehouse, one of the top distributors of Digital Lifestyle Products.

Picking potential leaders - II

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell

THE LAW OF THE INNER CIRCLE: THOSE who are closest to me will determine the level of my success.

Last time, I shared four of the 11 questions I ask myself when selecting leaders to serve beside me:

1. Do I see a constructive spirit of discontent?
2. Do they offer practical ideas?
3. When they speak, who listens?
4. Do others respect them?

Your inner circle will prop you up or pull you down as a leader. You cannot afford to place the wrong people by your side. An unethical or divisive leader can be poison to the bloodstream of an entire organization. That's why I'm a firm believer in making a comprehensive evaluation of a potential hire.

Here are questions 5-11 that I ask when choosing potential leaders:

5. Can they create or catch a vision?

I have a subset of four questions I try to answer when evaluating a potential leader's ability to catch or cast a vision:

Are they able to become a part of someone else's vision before they demand that others follow their vision?

I watch emerging leaders to see if they can catch a vision before I determine whether they can create a vision. I look for potential leaders who are willing to follow before they lead. I want to see if they can serve before they empower.

Do they add value to the vision given to them?

In other words, do they have the creativity to take a vision and make it better? Rather than blindly implementing the vision of another leader, potential leaders are able to improve upon the vision and make enhancements to it.

Do they show a high level of commitment to the vision?

After they buy into the vision, I want to know if they will pay the price to make the dream a reality. Potential leaders are willing to take responsibility for the vision.

Are they passionate about the vision?

A person can accept a vision and take steps toward its fulfillment, but I am searching for an added dimension of excitement and energy. I want a person with a contagious passion for the vision; someone with an infectious enjoyment who spreads the vision to others.

6. Do they show a willingness to take responsibility?

In my opinion, The Statue of Liberty should have a sister-statue—The Statue of Responsibility. People are quick to defend against infringements upon their freedom, but slow to take responsibility for their actions.

Benjamin Franklin said: "I never knew a man that was good at making excuses who was good at anything else." Avoid choosing employees who are unwilling to take ownership or averse to responsibility. It's easier to go from failure to success than from excuses to success.

7. Do they finish the job?

The bookends of success are initiative and closure. If you cannot initiate, you cannot make things happen. If you cannot close, things that could happen never will.

Take notice of the projects you delegate to a potential leader. Do the jobs get completed 100 percent, or do they end up back at your desk demanding time and attention? The answer will tell you a lot about the leadership ability of the potential leader.

8. Are they emotionally strong?

No one can lead without being criticized or facing discouragement. A potential leader needs mental toughness. I don't want a mean leader, but I do want a tough-minded leader who confronts reality and pays the price of success.

9. Do they possess strong people skills?

Leaders with people skills will be more enjoyable to work with, and they will get more accomplished. Be wary of hiring a potential leader without friendliness, tact, or team spirit.

Observe whether the potential leader motivates or manipulates others. Motivation is moving people for mutual advantage, and it is a necessary leadership skill. Manipulation is moving people for personal advantage. Manipulation is always wrong and damaging to the health of teams and organizations.

Even without experience in a leadership position, potential leaders are already exerting influence in some capacity. Research their track record—both their achievements and their impact on the lives of those nearest them.

If they can lead people without having a position, they'll do very well when they get one. If they can't lead people without a position, giving them a title will not help. The leader makes the position; the position doesn't make the leader.

10. Will they lead others with a servant's heart?

Servant-leaders never pursue a mission at the expense of their people. Rather, servant-leaders earn the loyalty and best efforts of their people by serving the interests and investing in the development of those they lead. A servant-leader leads to see others succeed.

Rabbi Kushner was right when he said, "The purpose of life is not to win. The purpose of life is to grow and to share. When you come to look back on all that you've done in life, you will get more satisfaction from the pleasure you have brought into other people's lives than you will from the times that you outdid them and defeated them."

11. Can they make things happen?

Some people make things happen, and others wonder what happened. Make sure a potential leader can produce.

Kansan poet Walt Mason gives expression to the value of a results-oriented producer in his poem, The Man Who Delivers the Goods.

There is a man in the world who never gets turned down,
Wherever he chances to stray.
He gets the glad hand in the populous town,
Or out where the farmers make hay;
He is greeted with pleasure on deserts of sands,
And deep in the isles of the woods;
Wherever he goes there is a welcoming hand—
He's the man who delivers the goods.

One is too small a number to achieve greatness. To accomplish anything of significance, you must have the right people by your side. I trust these 11 questions will aid you as you pick potential leaders.

For information on John Maxwell's in-house or public leadership or teamwork workshops, please email us at maxwell@inspire.ph or call 813-2732/03 and ask for Gina. Text MAXWELL ON to 4632 (Smart) to get daily SMS leadership insights from John Maxwell. God bless!

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RESTAURANT

WHAT would Chinatown be without authentic Chinese food.

RUDY ESPERAS

Where ethnic …

From page B2-1

also grow," Lee said.

But he said that this situation would not stop the Chinese-Filipino from plying their trade.

Lee believes that there is still hope for the country.

Near Zocimo's stall, there are numerous hardware stores that offer car spare parts and equipment from China.

Chinese exotica

Turn a street and you will find stores that sell ceramic products such as tiles, bath tubs, toilet bowls and sinks. .

Souvenir shops are popular in the district. Products like figurines, good luck charms, incense sticks and brass holders, continue to attract thousands searching for Chinese exotica.

The relatively cheap price of commodities, aside from the ethnicity of the wares, is another reason why people flock to the area.

Like elsewhere in the country, haggling is an ordinary event in Ongpin.

"I got these (Buddha) figurines for only P40 each, but the original price was P100 each," said Dianne, a student of the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

Food

Shiamny, 18, a souvenir stall owner, is used to haggling with her customers.

"*Di pwede sobra tawad, wala tubo ... medyo lang* (there's a limit to the haggling, we can cut our profits but only to a certain point)," Shiamny said in Filipino with a thick Chinese accent.

Another attraction in Chinatown is the food.

Chinese fare such as *siopao*, dimsum, *siomai*, rice cakes and noodles, keep the people coming back for more. Dried beef, hopia and tikoy are also very popular, teasing people's appetite for years.

Also found on the streets of Chinatown are fruits—both fresh and preserved—herbs and teas. Some of the more exotic fruits to be found there are persimmons and dragon fruits.

There are also numerous Chinese apothecaries where herbal medicines and beauty products are sold.

Total control

Generally, business inside the Chinatown is still at its best even after 400 years.

And the people here take pains to protect what they have.

It is evident in how they protect the place. The leaders inside the Chinatown manifest total control, such as the assurance of peace and order to protect their businesses.

"The business establishments here are generally protected, only isolated cases of theft are reported," Lee said.

Chinatown is secured by large number of policemen.

This is one reason that the majority of Chinese investors prefer to put up their business in Chinatown.

The Chinese people inside the Chinatown seem to have built their own world separate from the country.

For them, Chinatown is like a country within a country, with its share of happy, and buying, visitors.

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New rule on mergers

Corporate Securities Info

Raul Palabrica

IN THE HIGHLY COMPETITIVE WORLD OF business, size is the name of the game.

The bigger the assets of a corporation, the better it can compete in the market.

If the stockholders of a cash-strapped company are unable to contribute additional equity, banks and lending institutions are often called on for financial relief.

There is a limit, however, to the amount of money that can be borrowed. Creditors are not exactly apostles of charity. They will lend only to companies that can promptly pay their debts.

After all, they too have to show profits in their books.

When the lending windows are closed or, if open, are inhospitable, the idea of merging or consolidating with a financially sound corporation becomes an attractive proposition to a beleaguered company.

For some stockholders, merger or consolidation with another business entity, with the consequent loss of identity, is not a pleasant experience.

But when the choice is between bankruptcy and remaining afloat through merger or consolidation with a "white knight," sentimentality has to take a back seat.

Creditors

With merger or consolidation evolving into an efficient way of meeting market challenges, the Securities and Exchange Commission has, as of last May 4, relaxed the rules on this business activity.

Mergers of corporations can now be undertaken without need of getting the prior consent or approval of the creditors of the constituent corporations.

Under normal circumstances, when a debt is assigned or transferred by a debtor to a third party, the creditor's consent to that action is needed to validate the transaction.

This requirement is for the creditor's protection. It is not fair to force him to accept a change in debtor if he thinks the latter does not have the capacity to satisfy the financial obligation.

In the case of debts incurred by a corporation that will be absorbed by or merged with another corporation, the change of debtor is more apparent than real.

The corporation that will be absorbed or merged with another corporation remains the debtor, but this time it bears the name of the corporation that it merged with.

Solvent

The surviving corporation steps into the shoes of the original debtor and, in the process, assumes all the assets, rights and liabilities of the absorbed business entity.

Thus, except for the change in the debtor's name, the creditor of the absorbed corporation is in no worse or better condition that it was before the merger.

The "no creditor approval" rule applies regardless of the financial health of the constituent corporations, or whether the merger will result in an insolvent surviving corporation.

But this should not be taken to mean that the creditors are out of the loop of the consolidation process.

The corporations involved in the merger are obliged to inform their respective creditors of the proposed business combination.

Under SEC rules, if the parties to a projected merger are all solvent, the corporate secretary of the corporations involved must certify that they have notified their creditors of that plan.

The manner of notifying the creditors—postage mail, courier service or posting of the notice in a public bulletin board—is left to the discretion of the corporation.

It is in the best position to determine the best way of informing its creditors about the proposed business marriage.

Insolvent

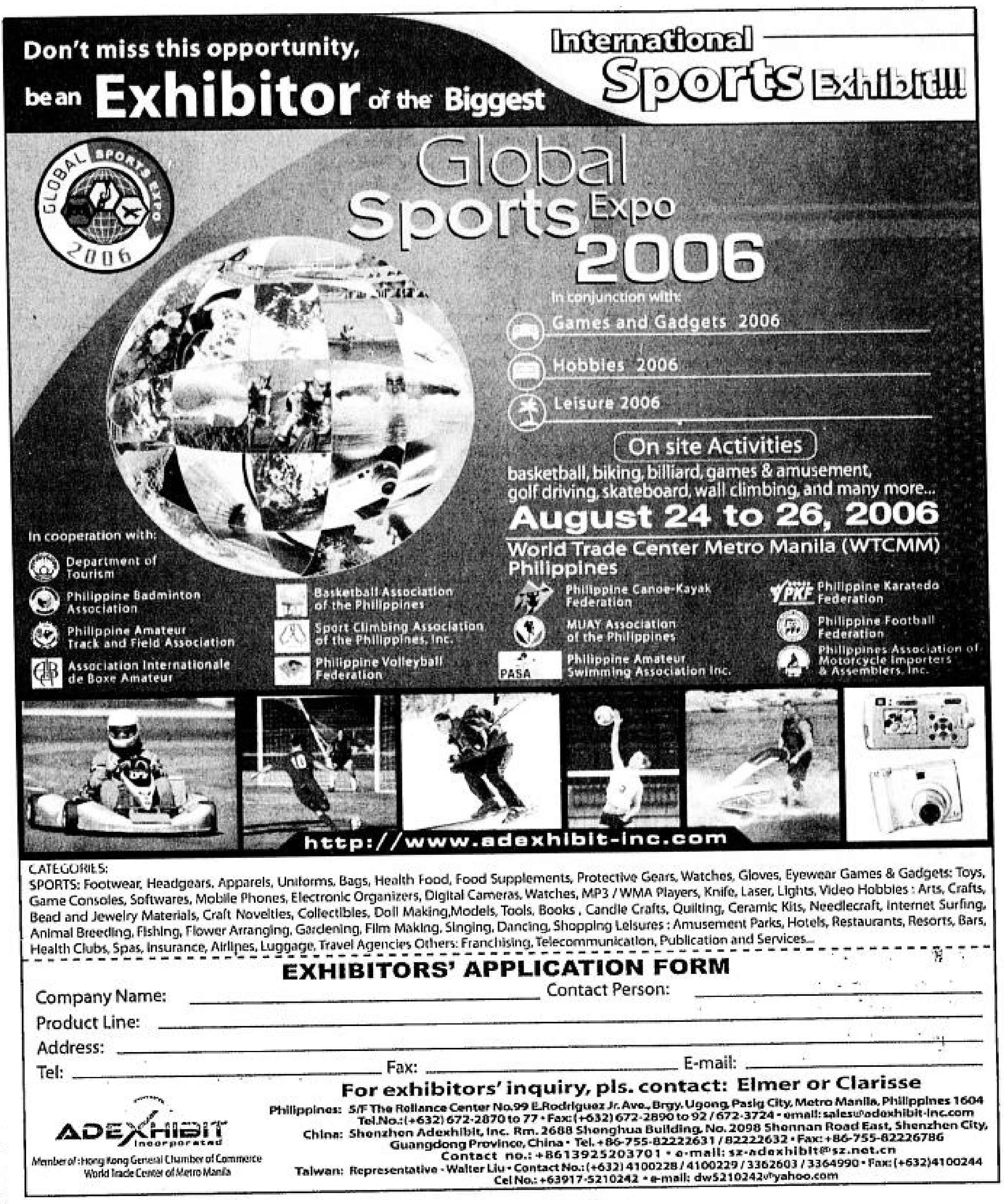
On the other hand, if any of the constituent corporations is insolvent, the publication in a newspaper of general circulation of the proposed merger will suffice to meet the notice requirement.

The affidavit of publication by the publisher or business manager of the newspaper concerned of that merger plan shall be sufficient to show proof of compliance with that requirement.

The "newspaper" approach is used in this situation because experience has shown that it is the least expensive, yet most effective, way of notifying the creditors of an insolvent corporation.

This notice requirement is mandatory. Since creditors' consent is not a requirement for merger, informing them is the least that the constituent corporations can and should do for the people who trusted them with their money.

After going through the documentation process, the constituent corporations must submit their plan of merger to the SEC and convince it that the business transaction is in the best interests of the stockholders and the public. *(For feedback, please write to rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph)*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MAP takes stand on Charter change

MAPPING THE FUTURE

THE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF THE Philippines supports the complete review of the 1987 Constitution. However, any proposed changes to it, being the fundamental law of the land, call for a careful, intelligent, deliberate and credible process.

The MAP, an association of business professionals and executives, believes that People's Initiative as enshrined in the Constitution must be used in the right manner for the right purpose.

As its name implies, such move must originate from the grassroots, not from above. Such right given to the people assumes that the constituents are given the opportunity to study and understand the issues, enabling them to make informed choices.

There is no reason to short-cut proper procedures to get the Constitution amended by July 15, 2006 as some politicians have targeted. There is nothing sacred about this date that will justify the hurried manner by which the so-called People's Initiative is being pushed.

Such rush just raises questions about the motivations of the people who espouse this method.

Therefore, let us do what is right for the country by reviewing the Constitution completely. In particular, economic reforms are most important in stimulating growth and so with social and other provisions that must be studied and amended to achieve the stated objective of solving the poverty problem.

Hence, let us take this precious opportunity to prioritize the interests of the Filipino people, even if self-sacrifice is called for. The People's Initiative that is being advocated now is not the means to revise the Constitution.

The MAP thus recommends the establishment of conditions precedent before a serious attempt is made to change the Constitution:

1. A careful and objective study of the present Constitution must be made and the provisions that deter growth must be identified for possible amendment. The selection process to name the framers of the Constitution must assure the electorate that competent and patriotic delegates will emerge from the process.
2. Our people must be informed, educated and enlightened so they can intelligently participate in debates and discussions to achieve acceptance of the process and its outcome.
3. The constitutional changes must not redound to the benefit of the incumbents, particularly those who are involved in the preparation and approval of these revisions. This prohibition should also cover the transitory provisions.
4. The process to change the Charter must be fully compliant with the provisions of the present Constitution.
5. The credibility and integrity of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) must be restored.

The MAP wishes to insure that Charter change will create a Constitution that will be a strong and permanent foundation for peace, justice, development and solidarity of our country. The MAP, together with other professional and business associations, calls its members to action to do their part to achieve this task.

May God bless us and our country.

(This is the official statement of the Management Association of the Philippines on the Charter change. The MAP secretariat may be reached via mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

Quiapo for the secular ...

From page B2-4

and sampaguita garlands. Today, he brings home around P300 a day.

The same goes for Carmelita Jose, 34, a sampaguita vendor, who earns P50 to P150 a day.

Her sales decreased this year, and barely enough to provide for her and her four children.

She relates that she started selling sampaguita garlands in Quiapo when she was still in high school. Her parents and her grandparents likewise sold sampaguita garlands.

Carmelita is passing on the trade to her two elder children.

The district is also a haven for the disabled like Triumfo Barlezo, 58, single, and a vendor of religious icons.

Mang Triumfo says disabled persons like him are authorized by the city hall and the church to sell items.

He and 10 others are provided shelter at Bukang Liwayway Homes, a private firm under Tahanang Walang Hagdan.

They were given a small amount of money to fund small businesses around Quiapo church.

He and the other vendors agree that Fridays are the best days for business.

Fridays, after all, bring to Quiapo the countless devotees paying homage to the Black Nazarene.

Some walk on their knees to the altar to either ask a favor, give thanks, atone for their sins or wish for a miracle. After that, most proceed to buy something.

It is not just the area around the Quiapo church that thrive with activity, however.

There is also the market under the bridge (Ilalim ng Tulay), where bargains abound.

For 20 years, Robert Tan, 52, has been selling all kinds of handicraft and embroidered products under the bridge.

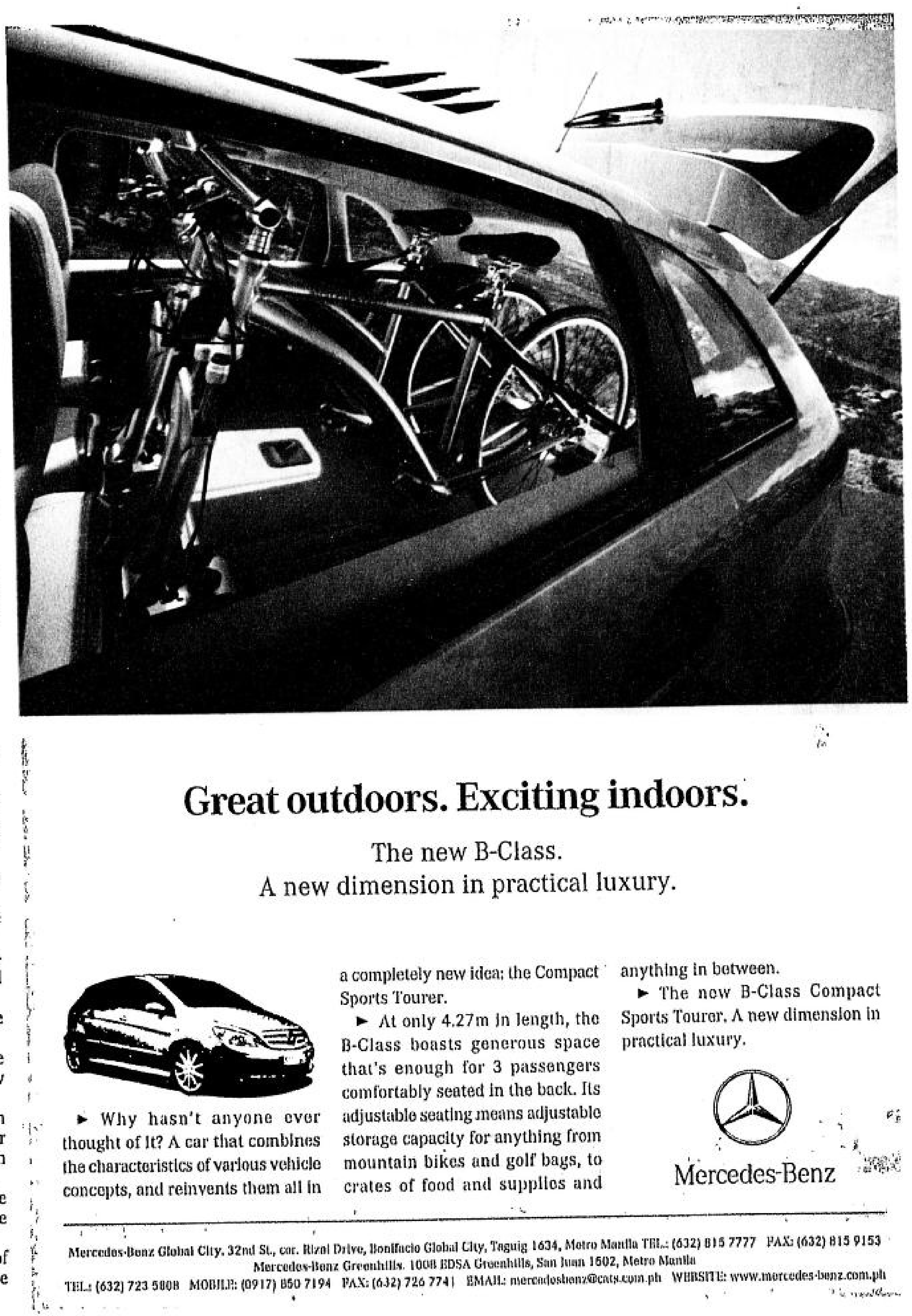
But like the vendors around the church, he also suffers from declining income.

"Numerous foreigners used to patronize our native products. But, over the past few weeks, our sales have decreased," he adds.

Niña Ibañez, 59, owner of Saint Joseph Handicraft, agrees with Tan, saying that her customers have not been coming in as often as they used to because prices have gone up.

She, however, says that entrepreneurs are sticking it out in Quiapo, confident that the economy will eventually turn around.

"Quiapo will remain popular in the eyes of the people as the haven of commerce," she says.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BUSINESS Monday

A VENDOR of religious items and candles in Quiapo, Manila, zealously sells her merchandise despite the ban on vendors around Quiapo church.

PHOTOS BY ALANAH TORRALBA

FORTUNE tellers are an attraction in Quiapo. Despite skepticism of these modern-day soothsayers, many still patronize their services.

DESPITE the sweltering heat and the unmindful passersby, this sampaguita vendor is all smiles.

Quiapo, for the secular, religious

District is heaven to bargain hunters

By Warren Adille, Marie Ann Brillantes, Lara Julie Bedonia, Vernice Puno and Christine Joy Manjares
Contributors

A MAN takes a nap while selling his colorful wares on a lazy and uneventful afternoon.

QUIAPO IS A WELL-KNOWN district of old Manila, famous for the wooden image of the Black Nazarene that has spawned a culture of passionate devotion among countless Filipinos.

But Quiapo is not just a center of religious activity, it is also a haven for unusual businesses.

Around the church sits palm readers and fortune tellers who do brisk business. There are vendors offering stringed sampaguitas for altar offerings, and candles in a variety of colors that mean different things.

There are religious icons in wood and laminates and rosaries in all colors, sizes and prices, which are sold side by side with amulets, pendants and potions for spells and counterspells. There are also medicinal plants that vendors swear can cure all sorts of illnesses.

It is these unusual products that give people one more reason to go to Quiapo.

Vendors, however, are feeling the pinch of rising prices that have weakened consumers' buying power.

Luchi Ladiya, 23, married, has been a vendor of healing oils and candles for 10 years now. She admits that her sales this year are lower compared to previous years. The number of her customers has also decreased.

"I want to go into a better business, but due to poverty I have no choice but to accept this kind of business just to provide food for my family," she explains in Filipino.

Jayson dela Cruz, 21, who sells herbal medicine, echoes her sentiment.

"I have encountered a lot of changes this year. In the previous years, my customers came almost every week to buy my products. But now, only a few of them purchase my products, only the ones who really need them," he says.

Quiapo, however, is also for the resilient, which these vendors are.

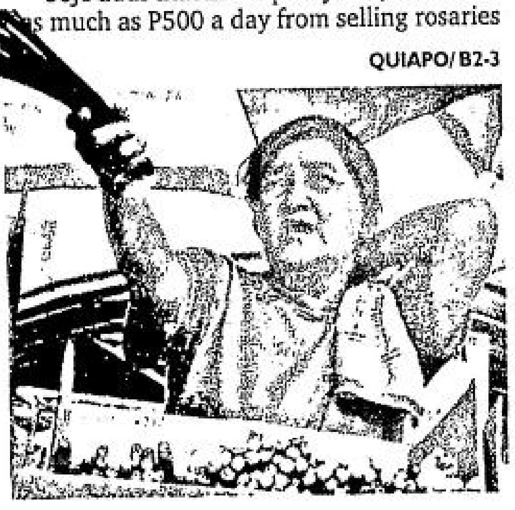
For five years, Jojo dela Peña, 12, has been selling rosaries and sampaguita garlands.

He says he had to stop going to school to help his parents provide food for the family.

"Every day, I sell from seven in the morning to five in the afternoon. Sometimes, if my sales are not that good, I go home at nine in the evening," he says.

Jojo adds that in the past years, he earned as much as P500 a day from selling rosaries

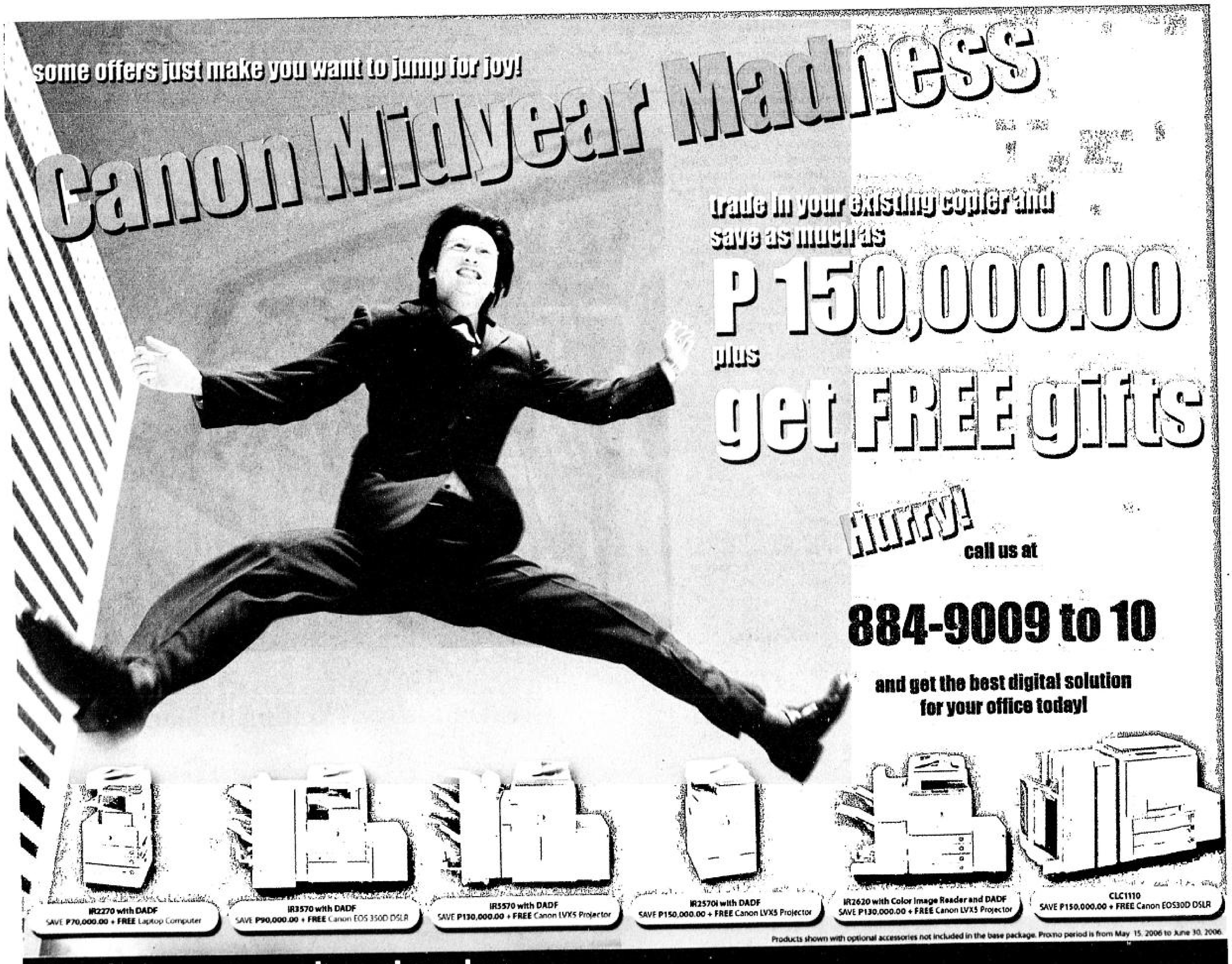
QUIAPO/ B2-3



FOOD stalls along Hidalgo Street in Quiapo, offer an appetizing and affordable array of food choices, from Filipino rice cakes to noodle dishes.

HERBAL medicine that promise to cure all sorts of disease, from the common cold to stomach complications, are a common sight in Quiapo.

AT THE BACK of Quiapo church are stalls of candle vendors who offer to burn colorful wishing candles for you. Each color corresponds to a certain aspect of one's life, such as family, health or love.



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MUSEUM Foundation to stage Cayabyab's opera 'Spoliarium' /C4

LIFESTYLE

Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

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Theater for a better world

By Gibbs Cadiz

A GLOBAL THEATER coup of sorts happens in Manila this month, when the city hosts two simultaneous international events related to the performing arts: the 31st Unesco-International Theater Institute (ITI) Congress on May 23-27, and the World Festival of Drama Schools on May 16-30.

Cecile Guidote-Alvarez, National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) executive director, is at the forefront of preparations for the huge event.

"This will be a defining moment not only for the Philippines but for the global community of artists and workers," she says.

Alvarez is the only Filipino member in the executive committee of the ITI Congress, a global meet established in 1948 and held every two years that aims to harness arts and culture as tools for human development and social progress.

Manila becomes the world's stage this month as it hosts the 31st Unesco-International Theater Institute Congress and the World Festival of Drama Schools

STUDENTS from the Shanghai Theater Academy, dressed up as monkeys for a performance PHOTO COURTESY OF EASTDAY.COM

Ancestral roots

The last ITI Congress was in Tampico, Mexico, in 2004. This year, the theme of the conference is "Ancestral Roots to New Artistic Routes of Expression: Mobilizing Cultural Diversity to Achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals."

Quite a mouthful, but Alvarez says it all comes down to going back to one's heritage, learning from the past, to make the present more meaningful and responsive.

UNESCO director general Koichiro Matsuura with National Commission for Culture and the Arts executive director Cecile Guidote-Alvarez and International Theater Institute (ITI) executive director and acting secretary general Jenniper Walpole, in an earlier ITI conference in Paris

"*Mahalaga* to link our new artistic works to the richness of our ancestral heritage," she says. "Our creations then become distinctive, varied, modern but truly Filipino. It's also a way for us to see that we share the same common historical experience. Our Aeta dances, for instance, are very much like those of Sierra Leone tribes. So it all becomes an affirmation of humanity."

About 500 participants from 100 countries—including, yes, Sierra Leone—are expected to attend the twinbill event, among them theater performers, directors, drama pedagogues, students and other cultural workers.

Unesco (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) director general Koichiru Matsuura himself will preside over the Leaders' Forum of the Congress.

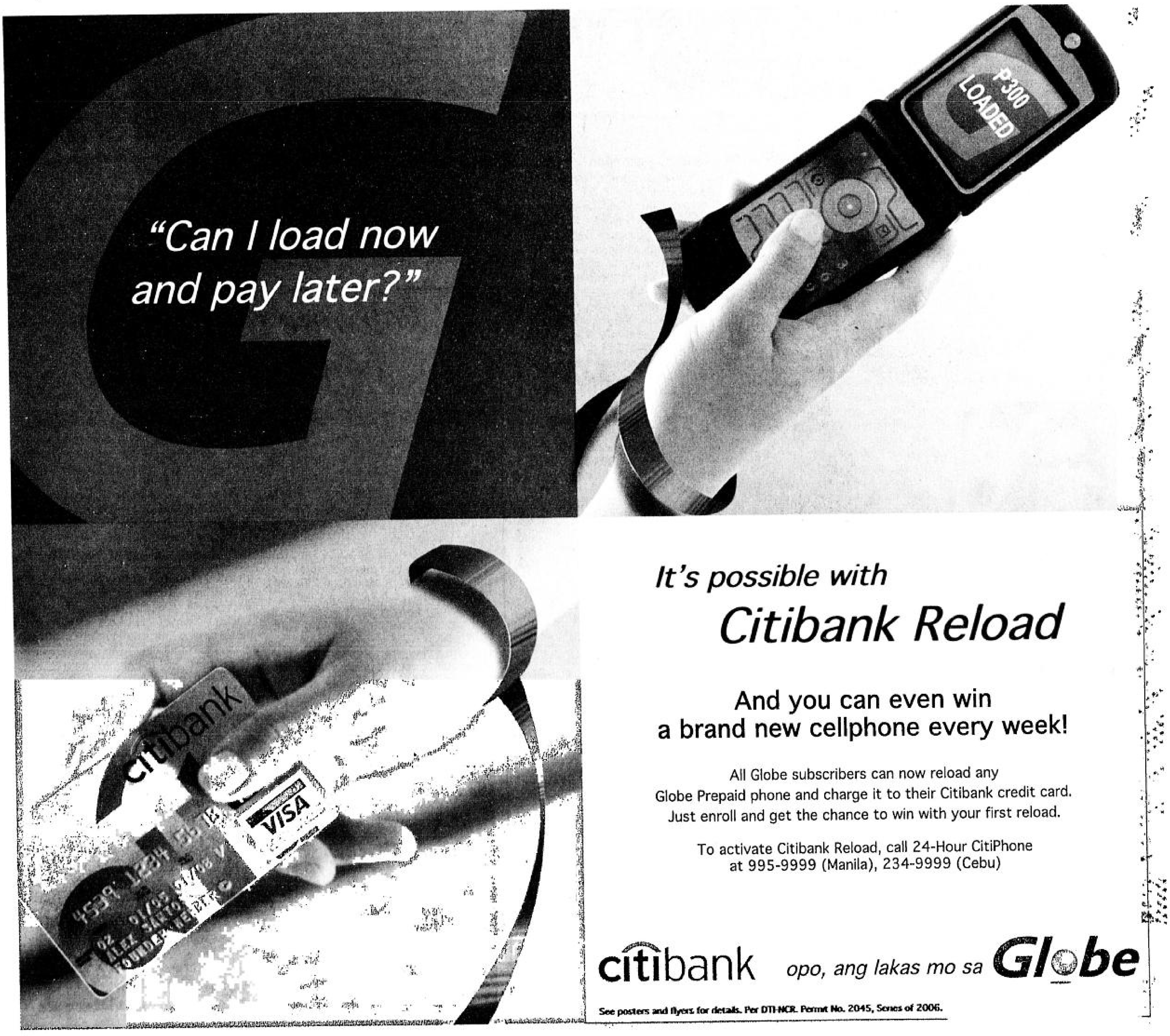
A series of simultaneous live performances, seminars and workshops will take place at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila Hotel, WOW Philippines-Intramuros and selected venues in 11 designated cities in the provinces.

For the World Festival of Drama Schools, the highlight involves 10 drama institutions from various countries fanning out all over the Philippines to workshop, interact and share experiences with local theater troupes and school-based groups.

Called "Theater for All," the program will see the National School for Dramatics Arts in Lima, Peru, visiting Vigan City; the National Drama School of New Delhi, India, touching base in Baguio City; the Department of Drama of the University of Cape Town, South Africa, in Santiago City, Isabela; the Center for Training and Research in Live Performing Arts of Burkina Fasso in Muñoz City, Nueva Ecija; the Theater Academy of Shanghai, China, in Legazpi City, Albay.

Iloilo City will host the Karpenko Kary Kyiv National Uni-

THEATER/ C2



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May events at Pundaquit Festival

THE CASA SAN MIGUEL Foundation of San Antonio, Zambales, is holding the last leg of the 13th Pundaquit Festival this month.

On May 20, choral music-lovers will be treated with a special performance of the multi-awarded Philippine Children's Choir from Mandaluyong (PCCM) under choirmaster Sebastian Trinidad.

Formerly the Mandaluyong Children's Choir, the internationally acclaimed group will render contemporary international and Filipino folk songs arranged for children's choir.

Alejandro Consolacion, resident PCCM composer-arranger, will assist the choir which play various Asian percussion instruments.

They will also do the Philippine premiere of "Requiem Eternam" by Nancy Telfer as an ode to Mother Earth.

The festival draws to a close on May 27 with a day-long festivity featuring visual arts, dance and chamber music.

Up-and-coming sculptor Jan Leeroy New mounts his first solo show at the Siemens Hall, Casa San Miguel's art gallery.

Titled "Myself as Adam After the Big Bang," the installation work is the culmination of the artist's residency at Casa San Miguel which began early this year.

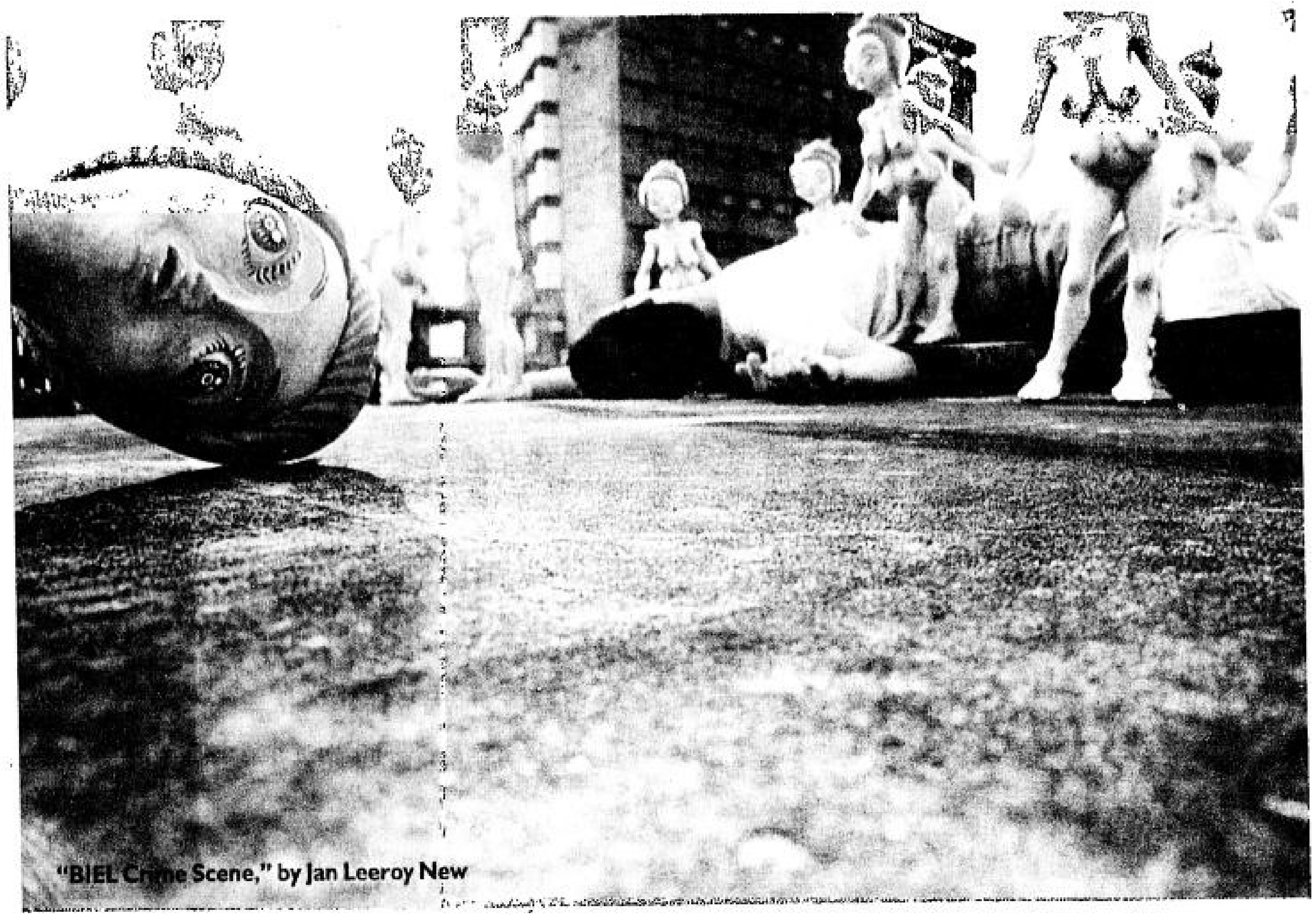
A dance concert will feature Myra Beltran and her Dance Forum interpreting her contemporary work, "Order for Masks."

Finally, a Memorial Mass and concert will be held to observe the first death anniversary of Ricardo K. Bolipata, patriarch of the Bolipata family of artists.

The Pundaquit Virtuosi, the children's string ensemble which he helped put together, will play classical chamber compositions such as Mendelssohn's Octet, along with selections from Ricardo Bolipata's personal favorites by Tony Benett and other 1960s crooners.

Call 9038657 and 9332392, or text 0920-9610320.

PHILIPPINE Children's Choir from Mandaluyong


"BIEL Crime Scene," by Jan Leeroy New

Theater for a better world

From page C1

versity of Theater, Cinema and Television from Kiev, Ukraine; Puerto Princesa City the School of Performing Arts, Theater Department, from Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts in Singapore; Cagayan de Oro City the University of Drama and Film from Bucharest, Romania; Zamboanga City the Theater Faculty of Veracruzana University, Mexico; and Davao City the Faculty of Dramatic and Theater Arts, Tehran University, Iran.

Pocket performances

Each of these delegations is also presenting pocket performances of acclaimed works by world dramatists.

Both Shanghai's Theater Academy and New Delhi's National School of Drama, for instance, will workshop Brecht's "The Caucasian Chalk Circle," while the Romanian troupe will stage Ionesco's "The Rhinoceros" and Garcia Lorca's "Blood Wedding" will see incarnations by the UP Drama Department as well as by performers from Iran, Peru and South Africa.

Specialized workshops will also be held at St. Paul's College auditorium, featuring three theater luminaries. Professor Andrey Andreev of the Theater Academy of St. Petersburg, Russia, will do 30 hours of demonstration workshop on Chekhov, culminating in the production of the playwright's "The Wedding Proposal."

From Japan, actress and stage director Sayoko Shirotani will discuss and demonstrate "Japanese Traditional Culture." From the US, professor Maria Horne from Buffalo University, New York, will tackle "American Method Acting," the revolutionary performance philosophy that gave the world Marlon Brando, Paul Newman and Montgomery Clift.

Filipino director Anton Juan has his own workshop and showcase production on "Creative Theater" at Lyceum University. It will focus on creative techniques in drama that can help achieve the UN's social goals such as eradicating hunger, ensuring education for all and protecting cultural diversity.

The Department of Tourism is adding to the rich cultural brew with an exhibit called "Pista ng Katutubong Pilipino" at Clamshell 1, Intramuros, on May 23-29.

"It will feature tribal culture, crafts, cooking demonstrations, rituals—all the ancestral components leading to modern theater," explains Alvarez.

Alvarez herself is mounting a play, "Something to Crow About" by National Artist for Literature Alejandro Roces, featuring around 300 performers in a one-hour show to be staged at the Emilio Aguinaldo College auditorium on May 22.

Actors from different local theater groups such as Tanghalang Pilipino, Repertory Philippines and Gantimpala Theater Foundation have been tapped, joining dancers from the Ramon Obusan Folkloric Group. The costumes are courtesy of the Fashion Designers' Group of the Philippines.

Celebrity glamour

Adding a dash of celebrity glamour to the affair is Bibi Russell, the world-famous Bangladeshi model and Unesco Artist for Peace who is bringing over her advocacy of tapping indigenous culture to help fight poverty.

"Bibi Russell is a prime example of how the arts can cut the chain of poverty," says Alvarez. "She has created 6,000 jobs with her Bangladeshi weaving business, which helps nurture and preserve a traditional art form of her country."

That, in the end, is what this global artistic powwow is all about, says Alvarez: theater in the service of compassion.

"Theater helps stimulate initiative, creativity, imagination, capacity-building, communication skills," says the founder of the 39-year Philippine Educational Theater Association (Peta), the country's foremost theater advocacy institution. "The arts help develop a sense of compassion, which is actually the value foundation to help fight poverty. It can unleash the creative power, the avenue to help you transform yourself."

"Where politics divides, the arts can unite," she adds.

And with participants from Iran, Sudan and the US, among other countries, converging in Manila this month, the ITI Congress and World Festival of Drama Schools are proof of that.

E-mail the author at gcadiz@inquirer.com.ph

INDIAN girls participate in a dance workshop conducted by Prasad Vanarese of the National School of Drama, New Delhi. PHOTO COURTESY OF WWW.ACE-INDIA.COM

BANGLADESHI model-turned-designer and peace advocate Bibi Russell

PHOTO COURTESY OF WWW.THEDAILYSTAR.NET

31st Unesco-International Theater Institute Congress and the World Festival of Drama Schools

Highlights:

May 17—Simultaneous opening of "Theater For All" in 10 major cities in the Philippines

May 17-21—Workshops with Andrey Andreev (Russia), Sayoko Shirotani (Japan) and Maria Horne (US) at St. Paul's College auditorium, and Anton Juan (Philippines) at Lyceum University

May 22—Performance of "Something to Crow About," by Alejandro Roces, at Emilio Aguinaldo College auditorium

May 23—Opening of Unesco-ITI World Congress, Manila Hotel

May 25—Performance of "Regina Mother," by Manlio Santanelli, co-produced by the CCP and National Theater of Bucharest (Romania), at the CCP Main Theater

May 26—Formal closing of the Unesco-ITI World Congress

May 28—Performance of "Show of the World," staged by Yuriy Kordonskiy (USA) and Lia Perjovschi (Romania), at the CCP Main Theater

For complete schedules, call NCCA at 5272192-93 or 0916-4255254. Fax 5275529, e-mail oublic_affairs@ncca.gov.ph or visit www.ncca.gov.ph

UST grants honorary doctorate to Unesco head

THE UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS, WILL confer upon Koichiro Matsuura, director general of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco), the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, on May 22, at the UST Museum of Arts and Sciences, España, Manila.

Matsuura is now serving his second term as Unesco director general, which he won by an overwhelming majority during the 33rd session of the general conference because of his leadership in introducing reforms in administration and programming. He is acknowledged for his much admired passion for cultural diversity and his firm belief that unity in cultural diversity is the key to achieve peace.

The director general was also instrumental to the international assistance given by Unesco for the preservation of the Philippine World Heritage Sites, which included the most recent program on intangible heritage, the "Hudhud" chant of Ifugao and the "Darangen" epic of Mindanao, which were both proclaimed as Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

Fr. Rodel E. Aligan, OP, UST acting rector, will confer upon Matsuura the honorary doctorate. He will be assisted by UST Faculty of Civil Law dean Augusto K. Aligada Jr. and regent Fr. Roberto L. Luanzon Jr., OP.

Master of ceremonies will be Fr. Isidro C. Abaño, OP, secretary general of the pontifical university.

UNESCO director general Koichiro Matsuura

'Welcome to IntelStar' conquers Cebu

LITTLE BOY PRODUCTIONS Cebu, the same outfit that brought "Once on This Island" to the Queen City of the South, recently mounted a new play, "Welcome to IntelStar," at the CAP Art Center Auditorium.

The show was directed by Tuxs Rutaquio (who played Ada in the recent blockbuster musical "ZsaZsa Zaturnnah" by Tanghalang Pilipino in Manila), produced by Hendri Go, and starred Jude Bacalso in the lead role of Ma'am Chelsea.

"Welcome to IntelStar" is a 2005 Palanca Award-winning play written by Chris Martinez. It's about Ma'am Chelsea, a call-center manager who is conducting a Powerpoint orientation program to a new batch of recruits (played by the audience).

Her talking points cover such details of call-center life as acquiring neutral American accents, learning US time zones, handling irate callers and managing erratic time schedules. Along the way, the audience learns that the job is not as easy and comfortable as it sounds, as the drive to mimic foreign behavior brings about questions of identity and self-worth.

Bacalso's hilarious performance had the audience laughing in their seats from the start, with the cheering extending all the way to curtain call. It was another successful production for Little Boy Productions, which continues to work on bringing new and challenging theatrical material to Cebu and other places south of Manila.

For school bookings and tour, call 0917-6243658 or 0917-8155794.

JUDE Bacalso as Ma'am Chelsea in Chris Martinez's "Welcome to IntelStar"

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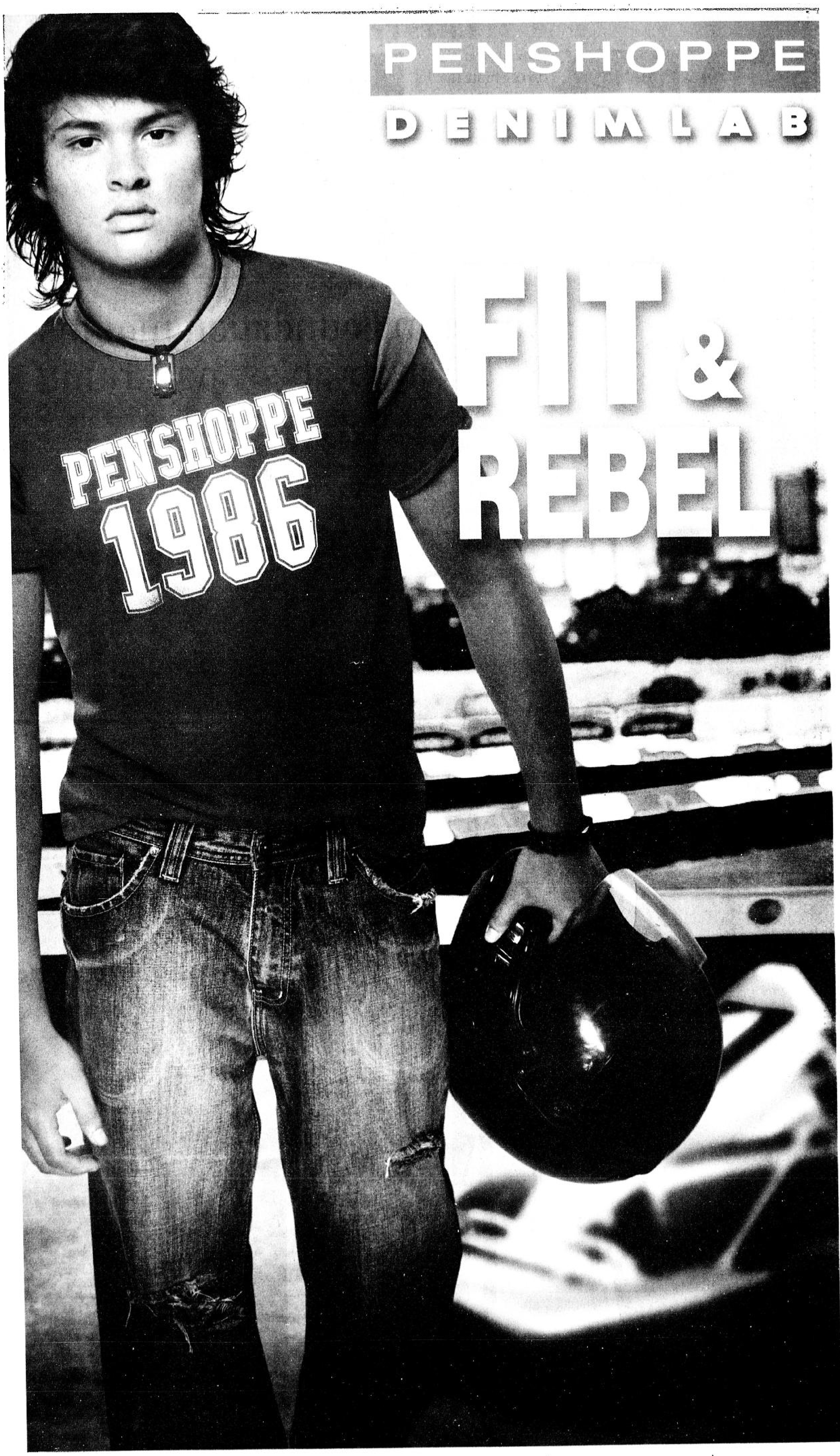
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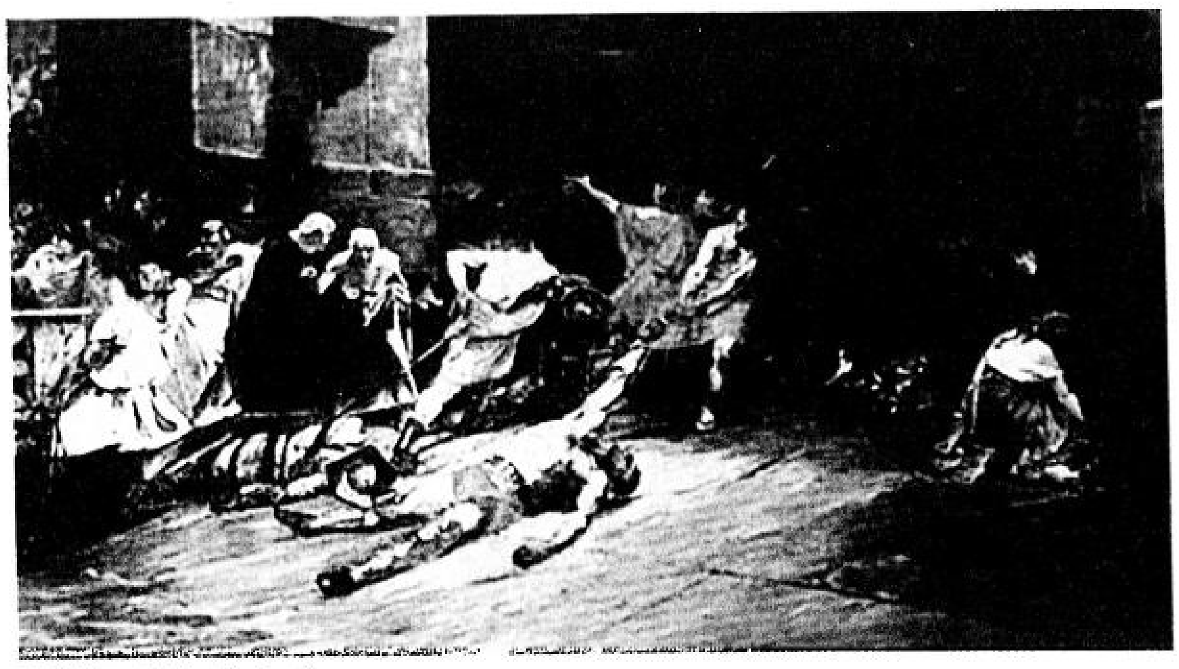
TATA Poblador

FIDES Cuyugan-Asensio

RYAN Cayabyab

What better way to celebrate the National Heritage Month than with the staging of an opera that bears the title of Juan Luna's masterpiece, housed in the National Museum itself?



JUAN Luna's "Spoliarium"

Museum Foundation mounts Ryan Cayabyab's 'Spoliarium'

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

SPOLIARIUM: JUAN Luna," a full-length opera in English composed by Ryan Cayabyab with libretto by Fides Cuyugan-Asensio, will be staged at the National Museum's new FCCP-Ablaza Hall on June 3 at 7:30 p.m., with cocktails hosted by Via Mare at 6 p.m.

The Museum Foundation of the Philippines (MFP) sponsors the presentation as a fund drive for the benefit of the National Museum. The staging of the opera fittingly caps the celebration of the month-long National Heritage Month.

"Indeed, what better way to celebrate the National Heritage Month than with the staging of an opera that bears the title of Juan Luna's masterpiece that is housed in the National Museum itself," said Tata Poblador in a press launch at Odette Alcantara's residence recently. Tata is the founding president of the Museum Foundation of the Philippines and was its president for 10 years.

The opera is inspired by Luna's life. The collaborative effort of composer Cayabyab and librettist Cuyugan-Asensio brings to life a rousing drama that is similarly evoked by Luna's "Spoliarium," a compelling depiction of gross inhumanity signified by the gladiators' fight for freedom.

Luna's painting won the Gold Medal in 1884 at the Exposicion Nacional de Bellas Artes in Madrid, Spain. Luna's contemporary, Felix Resureccion Hidalgo's "Virgines Cristianas expuestas al populacho," on the other hand, bagged the Silver Medal. Their winnings were a big boost to the Filipino expatriates' campaign for equality in Spain.

Tata spearheaded the return of the Senate and Congress Building to its rightful owner, the National Museum of the Philippines, 10 years ago. The effort resulted in the passage of the National Museum Act and an Executive Order naming the Departments of Finance and Tourism buildings as part of the National Museum Complex.

Today, she has regained her vigor once more to raise funds for the restoration program of the National Gallery of Art. It seeks to draw attention to the restoration work being done on the paintings of Juan Luna and Felix Resureccion Hidalgo at the National Museum, as well as the refurbishing of the FCCP-Ablaza Hall, which promises not only to serve as Manila's newest venue for the display of the museum's collection, but also as venue for more fund drives in the future.

As Tata explained it, maintaining a painting—say, "Bulakeña," another Luna painting—needs an allocation of a quarter of a million pesos a year (P250,000). The fund drive is an initial project in a wide effort to raise around P8 million, which is the amount needed to finish the National Gallery of Art and ongoing restoration works, and to construct more halls in addition to the recently done FCCP-Ablaza Hall that will be the venue of the inaugural opera presentation.

Odette Alcantara who hosted the launch expressed staunch support to the project. Championing the cause of environmental concerns, she said there can never be cultural conservation without environmental conservation, stressing thus the mutuality of the two relevant concerns. Tata informed the audience that it was in Odette's house where brainstorming was done a decade ago for the project of reclaiming the National Museum Building.

Excerpts from the opera were intensely sung with taped accompaniment by some members of the cast, which include Allan Dale Alojipan in the title role; Ana Feleo (Paz Pardo de Tavera); Fides Cuyugan-Aseñsio (Doña Juliana de Gorricho); Leslie Diaz (Trinidad Pardo de Tavera); and Paul Sugano (Luling, Luna's son). Completing the cast are Luigi Nacarlo (Felix Pardo de Tavera); Greg de Leon (Don Antonio Regidor); Nazer Salcedo (Jose Rizal); and Alexis Edralin (Carmen/helper).

"Spoliarium" had its world premiere at the CCP in February 2003 and bagged Aliw's "Best Musical Award" in 2004.

Helping MFP are the Friends for Cultural Concerns of the Philippines; Filipino Heritage Festival; National Commission for Culture and the Arts; and the Department of Tourism.

Only 200 tickets priced at P5,000 and P2,500 are available due to the venue's limited seating capacity. Guests are enjoined to come in semiformal attire or Filipiniana. Call MFP at 8130771 and ask for Andrie Bañaga or Elvie Magpayo/Dindin Araneta at 4042685.

ALLAN Dale Alojipan in the title role

ANA Feleo as Paz Pardo de Tavera

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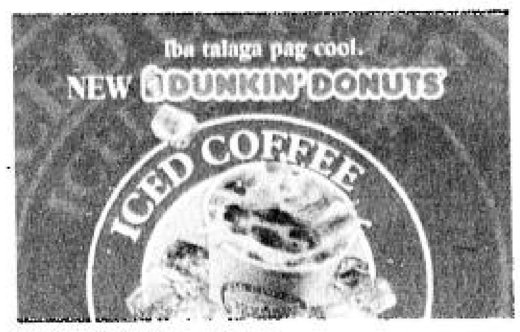

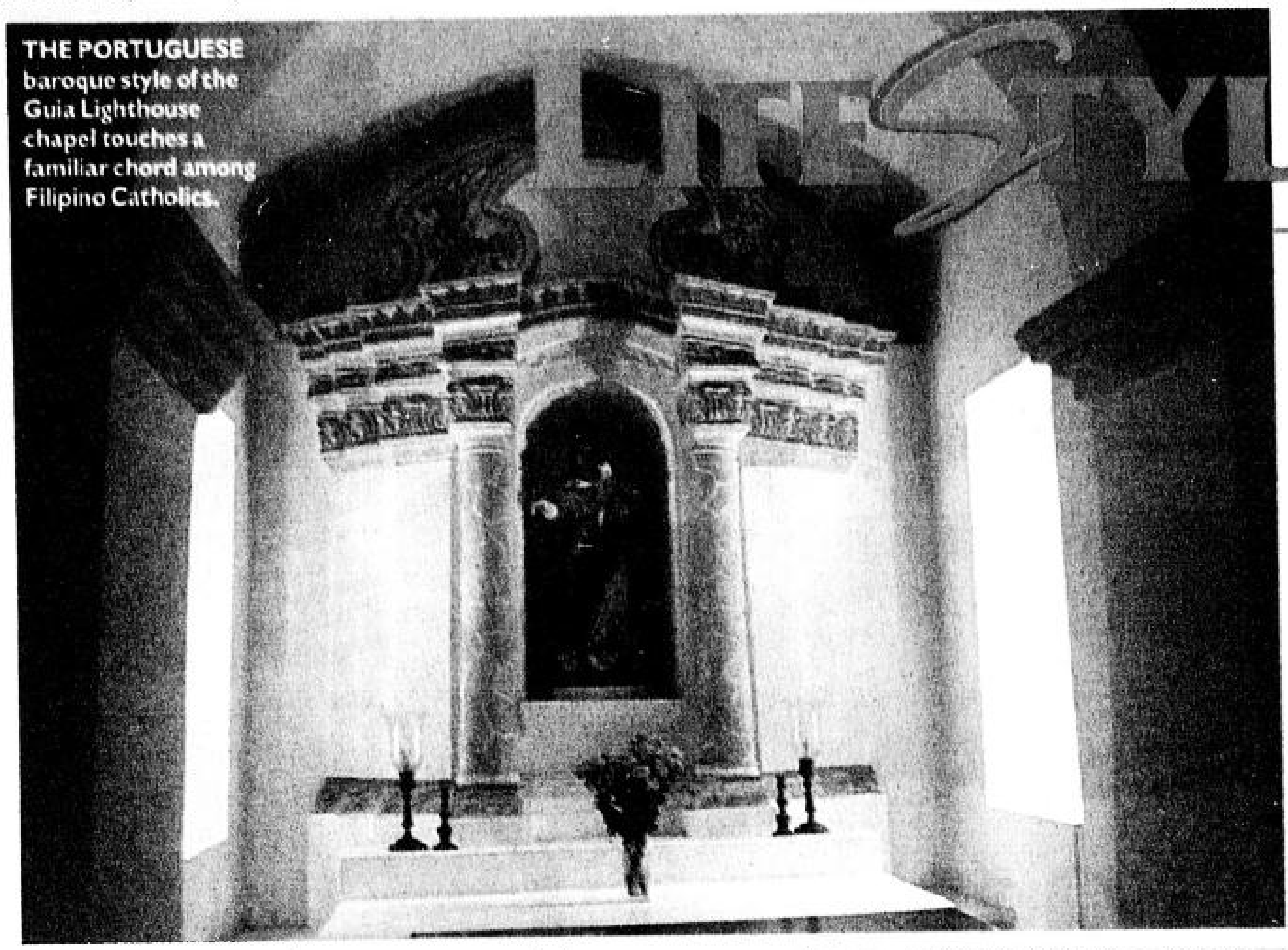

THE PORTUGUESE baroque style of the Guia Lighthouse chapel touches a familiar chord among Filipino Catholics.

LIFESTYLE

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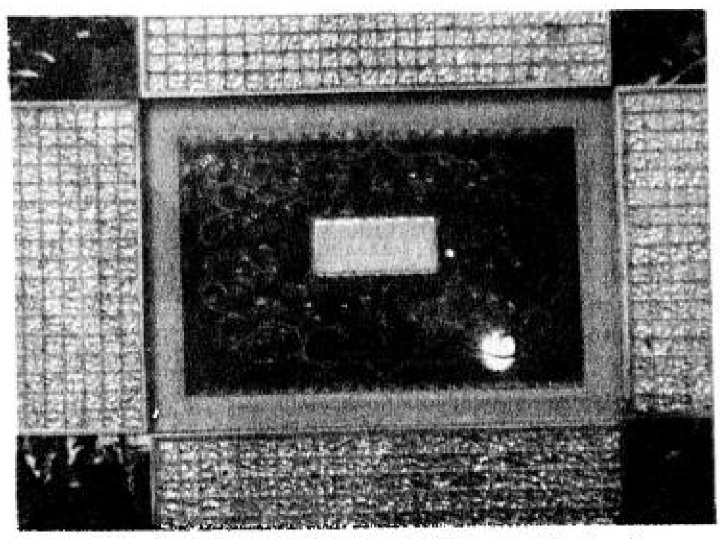
The former Portuguese territory offers multi-textural realities



ALL that glitters is gold at the Golden Emperor Hotel, where guests walk over gold bullions embedded beneath the floor.

The call of Macau

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

SIX WEEKS AFTER I toured Macau's heritage architecture with the Makati Chapter of the United Architects of the Philippines (see "Pride of Place," Philippine Daily INQUIRER, 02/19/06), I went back to Macau on an invitation to cultural journalists from all over the world by the Macau Government Tourism Office.

Angie Wong of the Macau Cultural Institute briefed us on Macau's conservation activities, particularly the inscription of some 25 local monuments of Chinese and Portuguese colonial origin on the prestigious Unesco World Heritage List.

Remembering what Carla Figueiredo, another heritage colleague from the Macau Cultural Institute, told me, "Macau has many realities that exist side by side," I set out to tour Macau once more.

Macau is a walkable, compact city. Paths paved in cream cobbles with black waves mark the heritage route, which connects temples, churches, colonial monuments, public buildings, museums, houses and picturesque plazas.

I walked away from the cobblestoned heritage route and wandered into the asphalt streets to discover another Macau reality.

With about 500,000 people living in an area of almost 55 sq km, tiny Macau is one of the densest urban areas in the world, apparent in the low-rise residential blocks packing both sides of narrow winding streets that rise and fall, following the contours of the low hills.

From apartment windows and balconies hang multicolored laundry that shades mothers walking along ribbon-narrow sidewalks either to shop or bring their children to or from school. Older children play on the sidewalks and tiny plazas. Filipina nannies push their little charges in prams for a whiff of fresh air.

Off the tourist path, small shops provide everyday stuff Macau residents need for subsistence—meat, poultry, vegetables, cooked noodles and roasted meats to take home, Chinese medicine, toys, school supplies and baby clothes. Shopfront restaurants served Chinese, Macanese and Portuguese food to die for.

There is no designer gear sold in these neighborhoods, just things needed for life on a daily basis in crowded Macau.

Designer shops were all around the lobby of the Mandarin Oriental where we checked in upon arrival. The hotel lived up to standards.

Its setting was like the Macau World Heritage monuments—dignified Old World gentility, wood perfectly burnished, brass polished to a warm sheen, and the service flawless. It was the hotel heritage my programming expected.

Two nights later, we transferred to the Grand Emperor Hotel. "Macau's newest hotel offering you a glimpse of the Royal Palaces of Europe," its brochure declared.

It was another reality where marble was polished to high glitz levels, crystal and gold chandeliers sparkled on ceilings and walls, and all surfaces were gold-trimmed. Was everything that glittered gold?

Some of the glitter is gold. Tamper-proof glass covers 78 pieces of 1-kg gold bullion bars below floor level, a Golden Avenue leading guests through the lobby to the reception desk or to the hotel casino.

At the Grand Emperor, portraits of a youthful Queen Elizabeth and King George hang on the lobby walls. Outside, a pair of gold-painted full-sized royal carriages flank the front door, and a pair of Buckingham Palace guards in full regalia guard the hotel entrance. At scheduled intervals the guards change with full pomp and ceremony.

Guests of the Grand Emperor delighted in their lobby ambience, ogled the gold bullion, posed with the palace guard, and reveled in the brighter than daylight lighting levels of the chandeliers. It was their kind of reality.

The Grand Emperor opened eyes. Mine. I was now operating on a different reality level from that of the Mandarin Oriental. I should now un-blinder myself and simply enjoy the golden moment.

Out of comfort zone

Stepping out of my comfort zone, I looked at the Grand Emperor lobby once again. Closely. What my former "habitual reality" would normally dismiss as gaudy took on a life of its own. I could see the logic behind it, and what mood the environment set out to achieve.

The lobby transports guests into a dream world, taking them into a fantasy reality, providing a respite from their dull everyday environment. For a few days, thanks to the mood successfully set by the lobby, they live in a "castle in the sky," away from the monotony of day after day existence.

Macau is a collection of different castles in the sky, each setting its own mood and ambience whether it be everyday urban existence, rural villages in Taipa or Coloane islands, elegant World Heritage churches and temples, or theme parks and casinos.

The Sands Casino is still the largest of the castles, at an area of 1 million sq ft (approximately 10 ha) with "upscale touches, featuring the world's biggest chandelier that weighs more than 100,000 lbs, over 165,000 sq ft (approximately 1.65 ha) of casino space with 65-ft (20 meters) high ceilings, three specialty restaurants and a 100-meter long buffet providing world-class dining."

Probably the most extensive castle in the Macau sky these days is found on the pier across the

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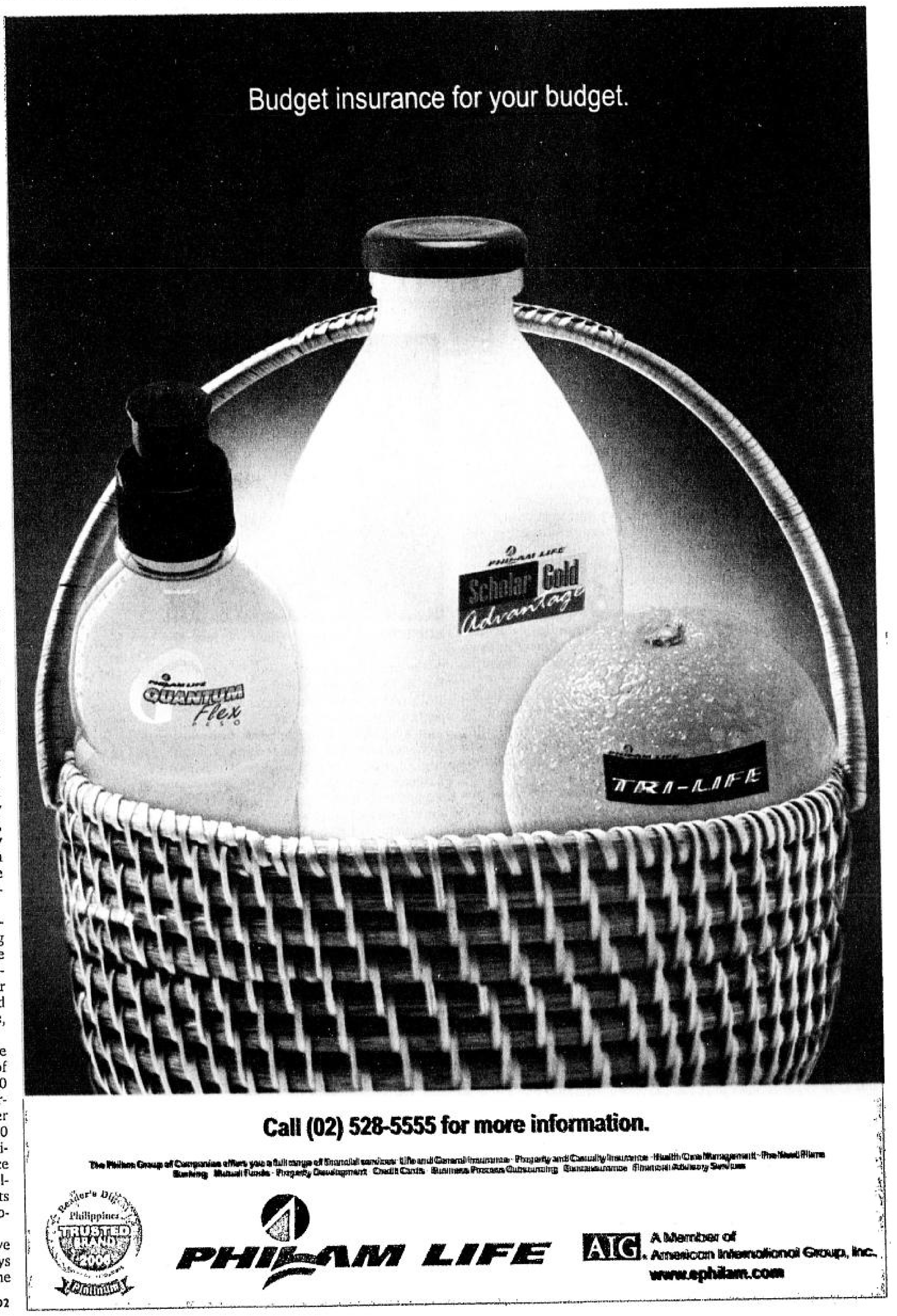
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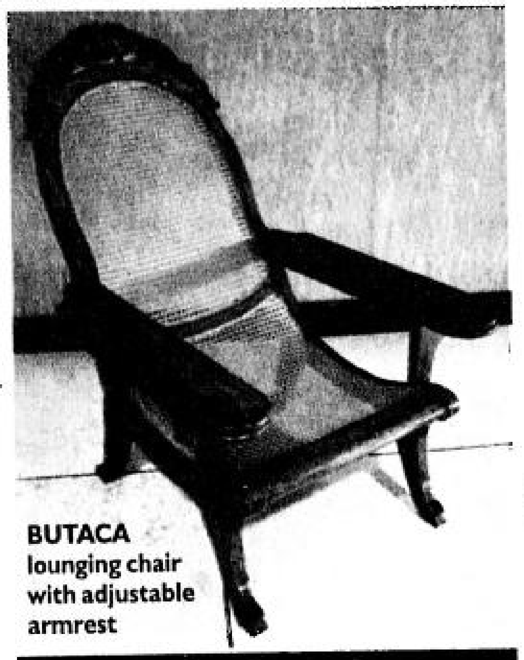
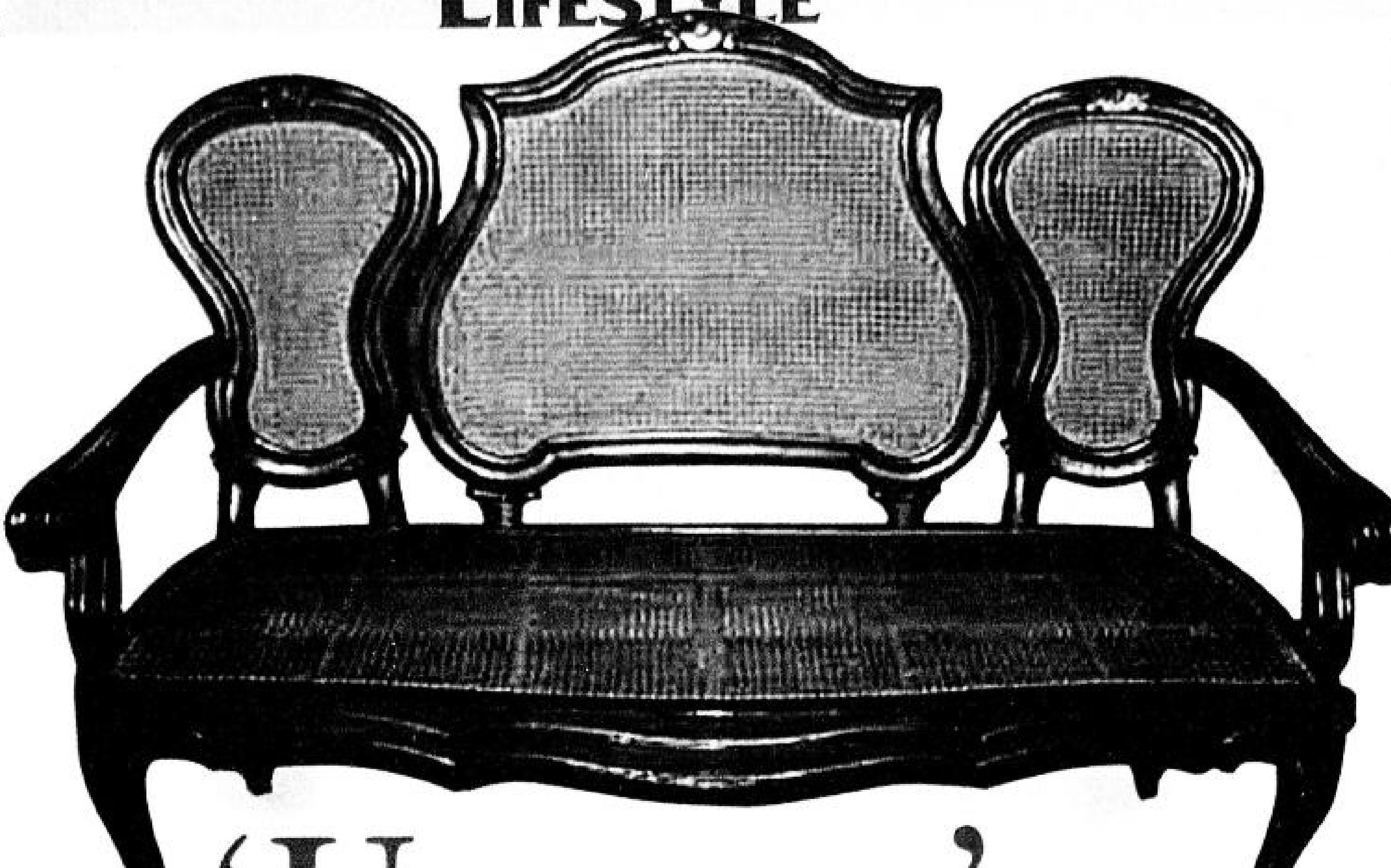


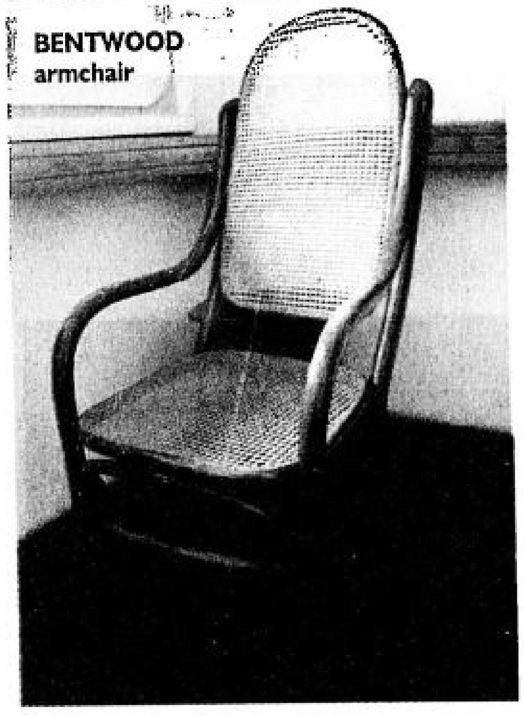
BUTACA lounging chair with adjustable armrest



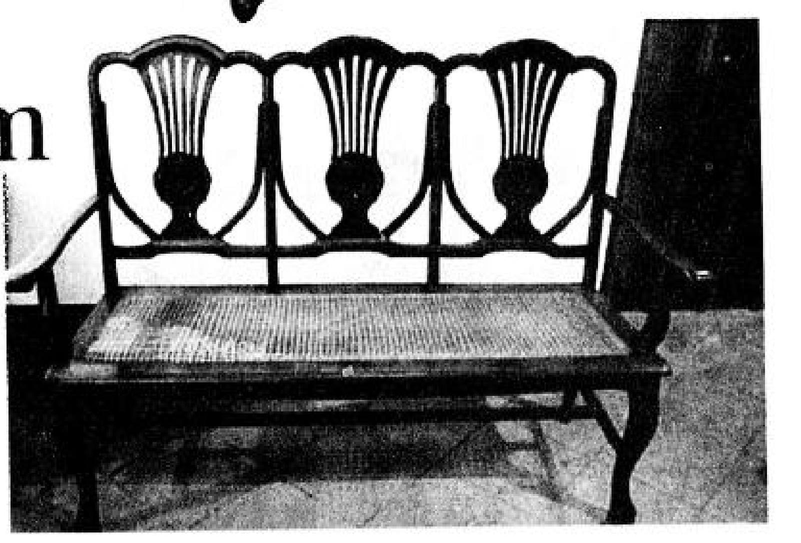
SOFA

SIDE chair

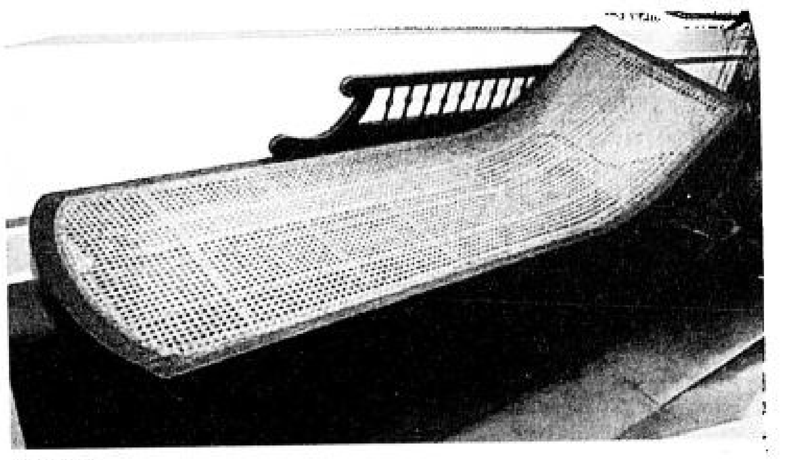
CHIPPENDALE side chair



BENTWOOD armchair



SETTEE



DIVAN

'Upuan' at Metropolitan Museum

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF Manila launches the first ever exhibit of chairs from the American colonial period, "Upuan: Philippine Seating Arrangements During the American Colonial Era," which will run May 26-Nov. 4 at the Tall Gallery of the Metropolitan Museum of Manila.

The exhibit features domestic chairs originating in the American colonial period, such as the *butaca*, *batibot*, bentwood chair, divan and rocking chair.

Showcased under one roof are over 100 chairs and benches gathered from different collections such as the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the Museo de La Salle, the Intramuros Administration and other private collections.

More than just a presentation of categories and styles of chairs used in the period, the exhibit presents chairs that encourage discussions of issues and meanings beyond function such as aesthetics, vanity, discipline, power and colonial modernity.

In the exhibit, the chair is treated both as man's extension and symbolic object that is created and modified in response to clashing social forces.

The show explores the deeper social and political meanings of the chair and of seating practices in the Filipino domestic environment.

A series of fora will open on May 25 at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila, 4-6 p.m. Curator Gerard Lico will give an overview of the exhibition and a talk on "The Political Dimensions of Chair in the Colonial Context."

Furniture expert Martin Tinio Jr. will discuss "The Different Styles of Chairs During the American Period," while humanities professor Felipe de Leon Jr. will discuss the functions and aesthetics of chairs during the period.

An open forum follows the presentations.

ROCKING chair

'Komedya' reigns in Antique

An old literary dramatic art form still thrives on Panay island

By Amadís Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

THE KOMEDYA OR MORO-MORO, with its battles between Christians and Muslims, flourished in the 19th century, then gave way to the *zarzuela* which, in turn, was overtaken by the cinema.

Like the *zarzuela*, the *komedya* is revived from time to time, Gantimpala Theater's "Florante at Laura" being a notable example.

In Antique, the *komedya* is alive and well, with the different barangays boasting of well-rehearsed troupes which perform during special occasions and fiestas like the just-concluded Binirayan festival of the province. The focus was in the capital of San José de Buenavista.

"The *komedyas* are set in mythical kingdoms and the material comes from the metrical romances of Europe, the *corridos*," says Alex de los Santos, executive director of the Binirayan Foundation.

"Traditionally the *komedya* is in Hiligaynon (Ilonggo), the literary language of Panay," he adds. Some, however, have been translated into (or written in) Kiniray-a, the centuries-old language of Antique. In olden times, the *komedyas* would run for 3-4 days.

"When we were children the *komedyas* would last until 3 a.m.," recalls Bella Zaldivar Julian, owner of Villa Gabriela Hotel in San José. "And the stage was so high. There were also cottages for the sponsors."

THE KOMEDYA "Leonoria" performed in San José, Antique

KOMEDYA scene from the Binirayan festival

The first documented *komedya* ("Gimeno y Rugera") in Antique was recorded in San José in 1893, with a review appearing in the newspaper Eco de Panay in Iloilo City.

As a highlight of the Binirayan, four *komedyas* were presented: "Gracia" (Brgy. Guinbangaan, Lauan, directed by Rebecca Baña); "Leonaria" (Brgy. Madrangca, San José, script reconstructed from memory by the director-writer Genaro Encarnacion); "Ludovico" and the contemporary "Mga Peste sa Parayan" (both by Brgy. San Antonio, Barbaza, and directed by Corazon Cataluña).

THE MORO-MORO is a resilient tradition in Iloilo.

Performances were on a stage in front of the municipal hall, with a set design approximating a castle-fortress. The performers were in period costumes.

Dialogue was florid, the delivery forceful, the choreography stylized, and the music (by a live band) frenzied during the battles and duels.

And so we were regaled by tales of a gardener who is really a prince—and, in the female version, a princess—and both save their kingdoms from the Moros; of three daughters who rescue their abducted father (the King); and good pests battling bad pests to save a farm.

Present during most of the performances were Gov. Salvacion Zaldivar Perez and San José Mayor Fernando Corvera, who was once a *zarzuela* stagehand. There was a huge turnout, with many children seated on the ground or standing before the stage.

"See how interested the children are," gushed Perez, daughter of the late Supreme Court Justice Calixto Zaldivar. "We are giving them culture at early age."

The call of Macau

From page D1

street from the Sands. Inaugurated last Dec. 31, the Fisherman's Wharf Theme Park is a collection of architectural replicas, rides, shops, and, like everything else in new Macau, will have its own hotel and casino.

At Fisherman's Wharf, a Tang Dynasty Palace replica stands next to the Dalai Lama's former home in Lhasa, the Potala Palace, which is really the ticket booth to enter Vulcania, the theme park's concrete volcano that erupts every hour on the hour while a rollercoaster zooms around inside its dark underbelly.

Trafalgar Square of London faces a concrete Roman Coliseum, a vast amphitheater for performances. Shops and restaurants are in buildings replicating the Caribbean, Italian Riviera, Amsterdam, Portugal and New Orleans. The Babylon Casino and The Rocks Hotel are still under construction. Fisherman's Wharf, a successful fantasyland, attracts tourists who love the surroundings and is really not a bad place to be in.

Diverse replica realities intersect in Fisherman's Wharf. Different realities also exist side by side in Macau's real world. Middle-class neighborhoods and genteel heritage precincts coexist with the blinking signage of brash new Macau casinos still rising in the reclaimed Cotai Strip envisioned by developers as Las Vegas East.

At the rate Macau is building up, could it be only a matter of time before Las Vegas is called Macau West?

This visit to Macau changed my reality. I learned that sometimes what glitters is gold. I learned that heritage could coexist with theme parks.

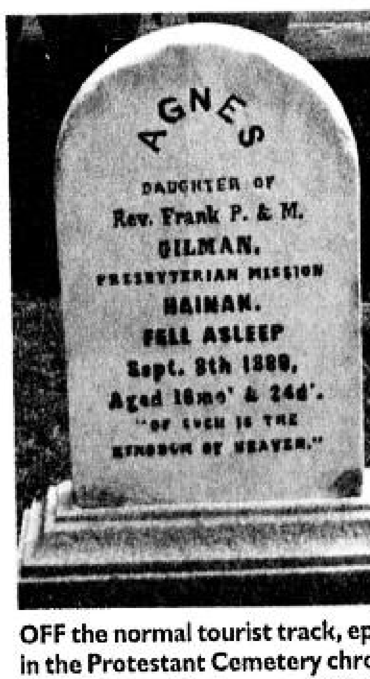
I learned that what is kitsch and tacky for me is wonderful to others. There are different realities. Each offers lessons for the other.

Local life, heritage, tourism and gambling trades each have requirements to be provided for, and in so doing the balance among the different realities of Macau is continually and successfully met. Coexistence is the key.

Multitextural Macau offers something for everyone.

Call the Macau Government Tourism Office in Manila at 8139047 for visitor information, or e-mail mgtophil@info.com.ph

Feedback is welcome at afvillalon@hotmail.com



OFF the normal tourist track, epitaphs in the Protestant Cemetery chronicle the early non-Portuguese settlers of Macau.

Arts and crafts shops call . . .

From page D8

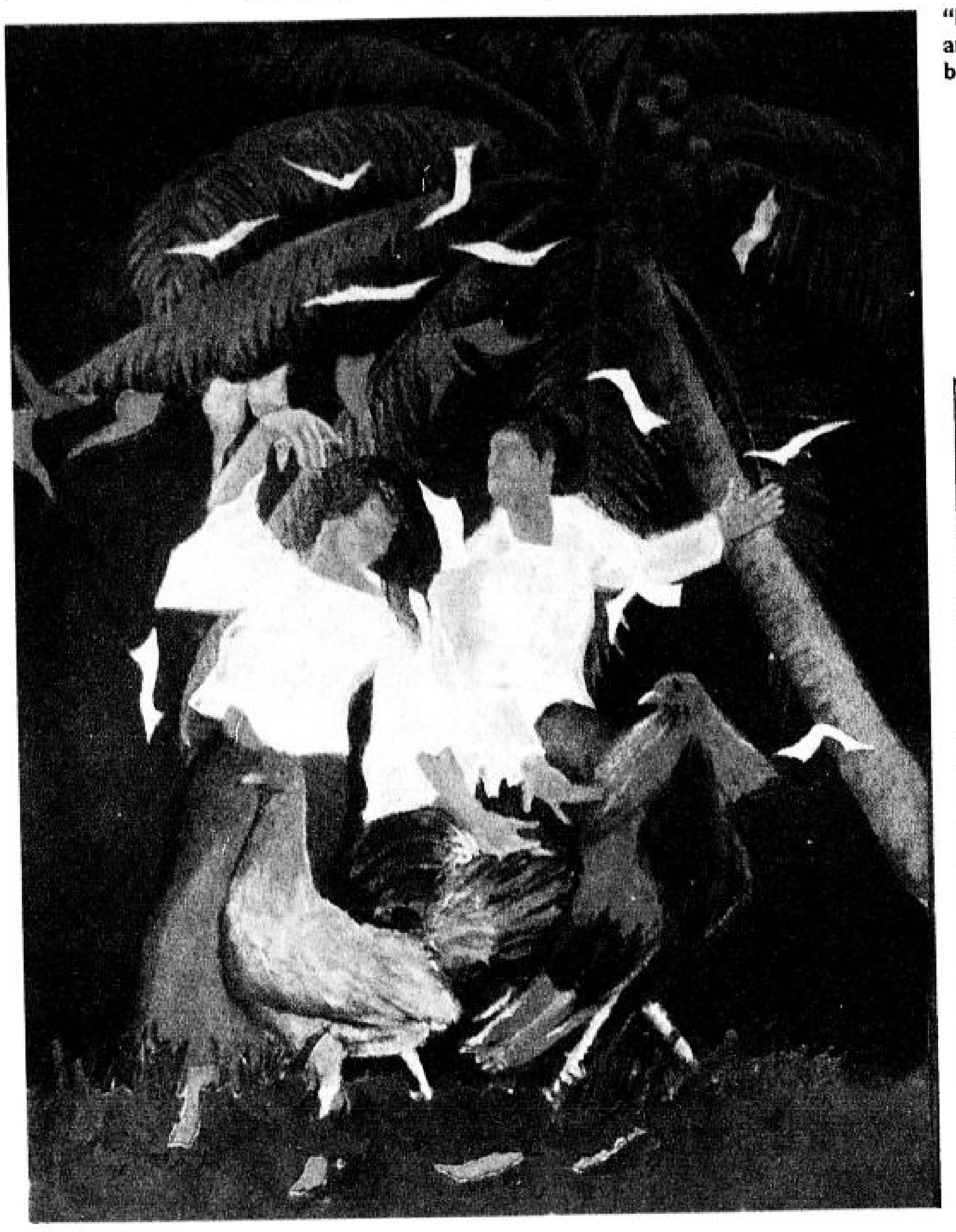
"We are a movement that seeks to encourage consumers to exercise their purchasing power to improve the livelihood of small Filipino producers who engage in responsible business practices," Claribel David, Philippine Fairtrade Movement spokesperson, said.

"We would like to call on consumers to buy local and buy fair," David said. "By buying local, they support local industries. By buying fair, they support those who practice responsible business by paying fair wages to their workers, providing safe and healthy working conditions, avoiding child labor, giving equal employment benefits to women; and using environment-friendly practices to make their products."

To accommodate consumers who decide to "dare to be fair," more Fairtrade Shops will open in Metro Manila and the provinces in the coming months, David said.

If you are interested to know more about the products and advocacy of Fairtrade, find time to visit the Fairtrade shops:

- Saffy (Social Action For the Filippine Youth) c/o Sofronio Lapitan, 2594 Lamayan St., Sta. Ana, Manila, tel. 5610395 (Product line: handcrafted baskets, bags, lamps, houseware, decors, light furniture.)
- Community Crafts Association of the Philippines (CCAP) c/o Gina Sodorra, 693 G. Araneta Ave., QC, tel. 7122160 or 0920-9012382. (Product line: light furniture, baskets, houseware, bags, lamps.)
- Preda (People's Recovery, Empowerment and Development Assistance Foundation, Inc.) c/o Alex Hermoso, Upper Kalaklan, Subic Bay, Olongapo City, tel. (047) 2239229 or 0918-9224453. (Product line: dried mangoes, mango purée, handcrafted bags, accessories, decors, recycled slippers, bags and toys.)
- Katakus c/o Betty More, Room 3, 2/F Vias Court, 53 Legazpi St., Davao City, tel. (082) 2218157 or 0919-8792620.
- Panay Fair Trade Center, c/o Ruth Fe Salditos, Sitio Manue, Tagbac Sur, Oton, Iloilo 5020, tel. (033) 336-9611. (Product line: *muscovado* sugar, banana chips.)
- Southern Partners for Fair Trade Center (SPFTC) c/o Geraldine Labradores, People's Fair Trade Shop, Dr. 1 YMCA Complex, Osmeña Blvd., Cebu City, tel. (032) 4125893. (Product line: dried mangoes, mango purée, bags, banana chips.)
- Handicrafts of Aklan Multipurpose Cooperative (Hampco) c/o Lionesa Leyson, 610 Rizal St., Kalibo, Aklan, tel. (036) 2686880 or 920-5105647. (Product line: piña and abaca fiber-based products, shawls, place mats, cushion cover.)



"DANCE of Love and Prosperity," by Edmund Balan

Samar beyond the typhoons

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

MENTION EASTERN Samar and images of typhoons and communist rebels immediately spring to mind.

But this province facing the vast Pacific Ocean in the Eastern Visayas region is also about peace-loving people gifted with healthy farmland and seas teeming with fish.

Laughter comes easily to Estehanons, as people here are referred to, and they grab at any excuse to be happy together.

It is these images that a group of artists from Eastern Samar captured on canvas and proudly displayed during the first Sidlit exhibit, held last February at the NCCA Bldg. in Intramuros in celebration of the National Arts Month.

The artists were gathered by the provincial government of Eastern Samar led by Gov. Ben Evardone and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts.

Sidlit literally means the first light of dawn, and it also signifies the beginning of these artists' goal to paint a different picture of their province.

Far Eastern University Fine Arts graduate Michael Balan from Borongan, the provincial capital, chose watercolor as a medium to feature the Estehanons at their ordinary tasks.

His works include "Pirilipig Kita" (Let's Pound the Rice), "Katburo" (Harvest Season), "Tinungogan nga Ngisi" (Dyed Smile) and "Oy, Karan-on!" (Delicacies for Sale).

The paintings pay homage to the province's many rice-producing towns, where life revolves around the planting and harvesting of rice.

In many of these towns, pounding of rice is still traditionally practiced as an offering for good harvest.

Michael's elder brother, Edmund, on the other hand, used watercolor, acrylic and oil, and likewise featured typical Eastern Samar scenes on works titled "Labnasan" (Shore), "Diskanso" (Rest) and "Duruongan Ha Sulangan" (Sulangan Port).

Other scenes caught on canvas include "Kuratsa" (Curacha) by Andy Apelado; "Parapamurot Ha Minasngi" (Minasngi Shell Pickers) by Nely Dala and "Paraiso Ha Liliputan" (Paradise in Liliputan) by Alan Dala.

Two of Alan Dala's works captured the attention of the visitors of the exhibit because he used tuba, a popular local alcoholic brew from coconuts with a distinct red-orange hue, as medium to execute "Didto Ha Sawang" (In Sawang).

Much to offer

Artist Billy Pomida, who represents the NCAA committee on visual arts in Eastern Visayas, said the artists chose to paint everyday scenes because they wanted to show that the province has much to offer if only people bothered to look beyond the typhoons, the poverty and the insurgency.

"There is a lot of beauty in our province and we tried to show that beauty through the eyes of our very own artists," Pomida said.

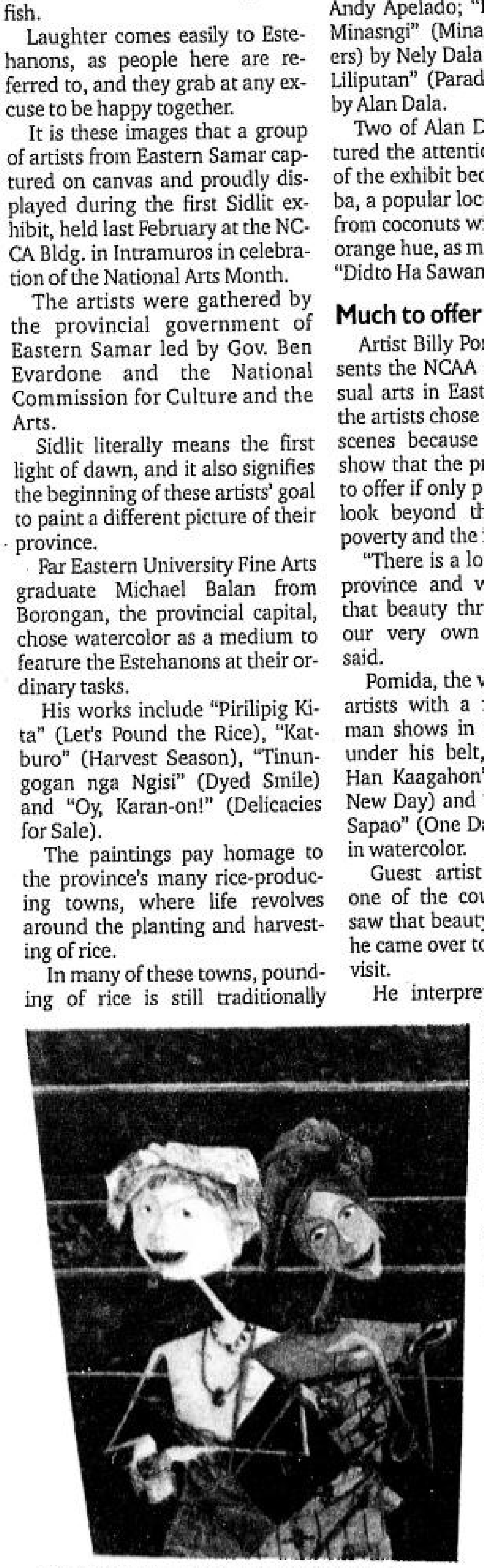
Pomida, the veteran among the artists with a number of three-man shows in the United States under his belt, exhibited "Sidlit Han Kaagahon" (Beginning of a New Day) and "Usa ka Adlaw Ha Sapao" (One Day in Sapao), both in watercolor.

Guest artist Egai Fernandez, one of the country's top artists, saw that beauty for himself when he came over to the province for a visit.

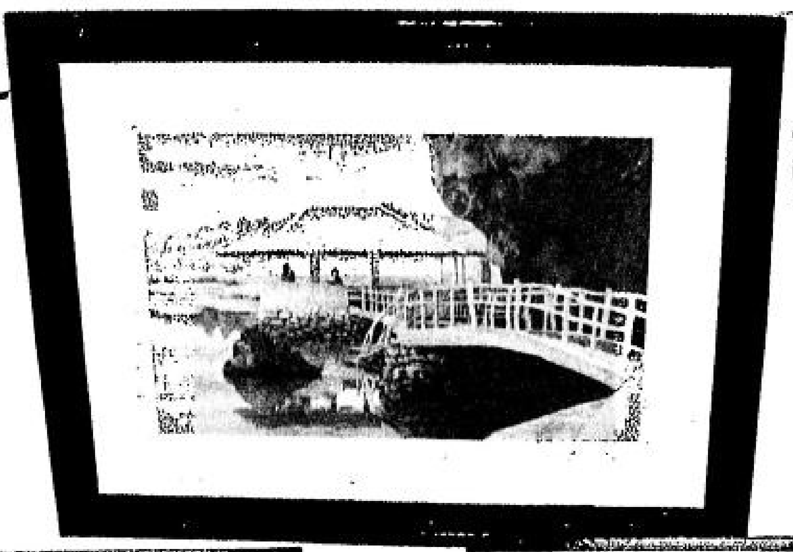
He interpreted what he saw through his works in acrylic, one of which is titled "Taub Ngan Hubas Ha Samar" (High Tide and Low Tide in Samar).

It is not only the visitors whom the artists wanted to touch through their art, but the Estehanons themselves.

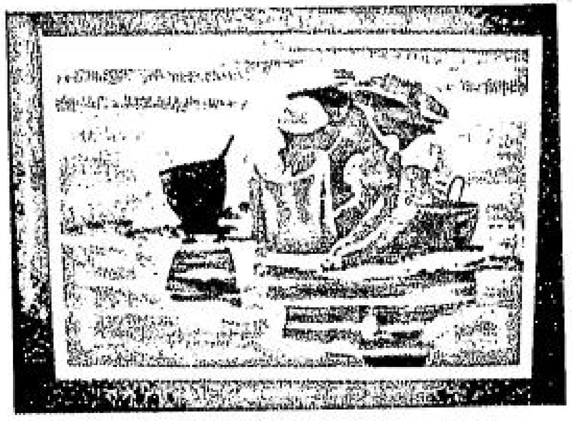
"We want them to appreciate their own artists and realize that the development is not just in terms of economic growth, but of culture as well," he said, "They must go hand-in-hand."



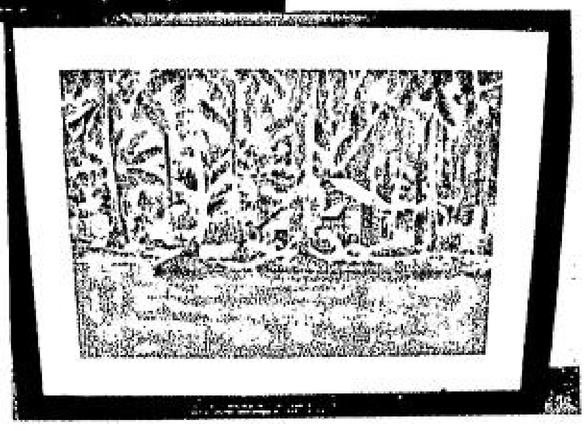
"NGITING May Kulay," by Michael Balan



"PARADISE in Liliputan," by Alan Dala



"MINASNGI Shell Pickers," by Nelly Dala



"NATAD," by Billy Pomida

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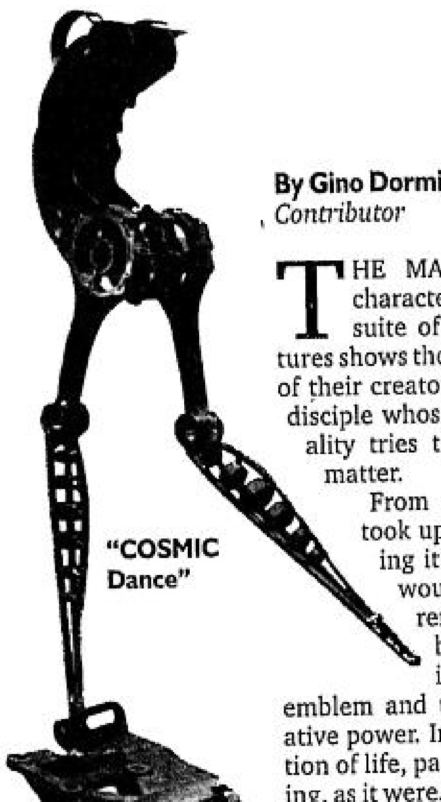
Mind-over-matter art

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor


"COSMIC Dance"

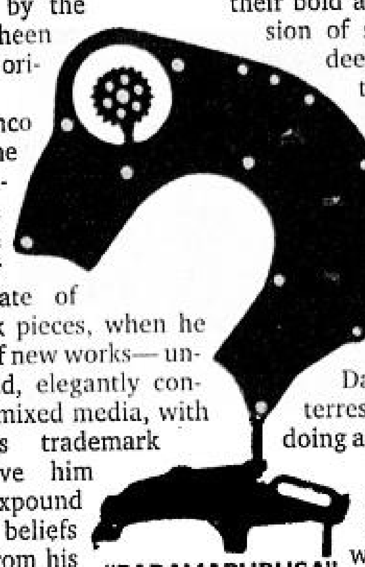
THE MARKEDLY IDENTICAL character inscribed on the suite of paintings and sculptures shows the ambidextrous nature of their creator, a vaunted New Age disciple whose deep-seated spirituality tries to enforce mind over matter.

From the time he formally took up art in college, pursuing it with the passion of a wounded warrior, Florence José Cinco has been fascinated with industrial junk both as emblem and the wellspring of creative power. In it, he sees the reflection of life, past and present coalescing, as it were, into the future.

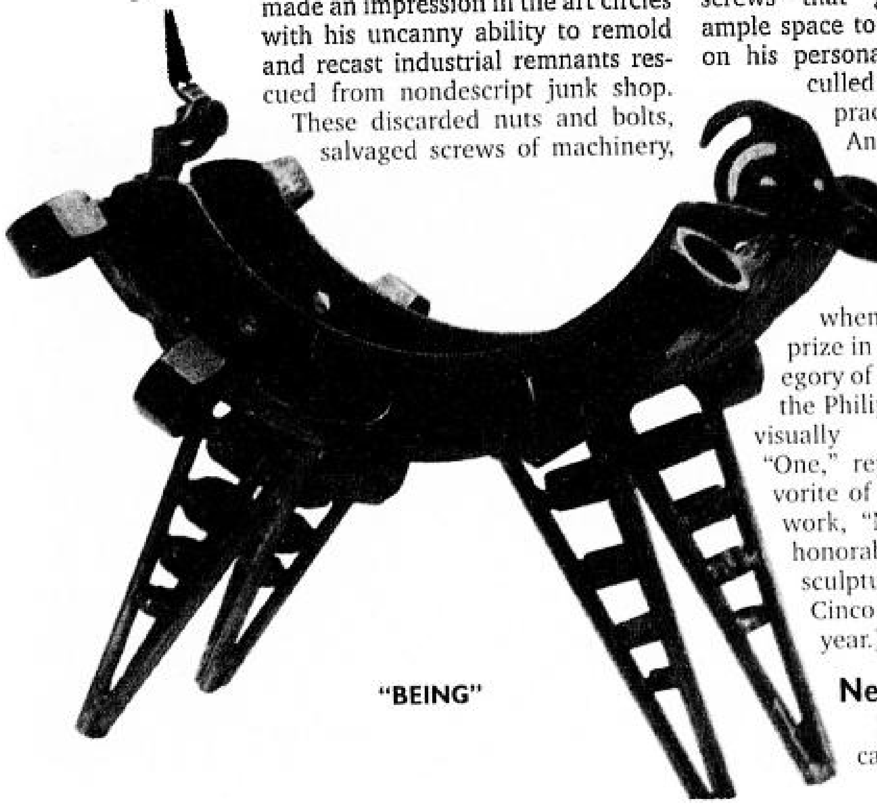
In his first show years back, Cinco made an impression in the art circles with his uncanny ability to remold and recast industrial remnants rescued from nondescript junk shop. These discarded nuts and bolts, salvaged screws of machinery, possessed a raw if primitive appeal in an age of unabashed utilitarianism, though a refinement of the spirit was, however, deemed crucial to artistic continuity.

Assembled in a rather slapdash manner, his early pieces betrayed their provenance by the outré shape and sheen of their metallic origins.

Last year, Cinco surprised everyone who had mistakenly thought the Waray wannabe was forever doomed to a fate of transforming junk pieces, when he mounted a suite of new works— unobtrusively crafted, elegantly configured works in mixed media, with a grid of his trademark screws—that gave him ample space to expound on his personal beliefs culled from his practice of Ananda Marga.


"PARAMAPURUSA" (means "god")

Also unexpectedly, he became the toast of the art world when he clinched the first prize in the mixed-media category of the Art Association of the Philippines Annual with a visually scintillating piece, "One," reportedly an easy favorite of the judges. (Another work, "Nirguna Force," won honorable mention in the sculpture category, making Cinco a double winner that year.)


"BEING"

New show

In his new show, also called "One," at The Big & Small Gallery, in allusion to the pursuit of body-mind synthesis, Cinco has mounted both sculptures and paintings, though the ratio has finally tilted in favor of the latter.

The four free-standing sculptures bear the resonance of Giacometti in their bold attempt to mimic the fusion of strength and grace, indeed, of body and mind, their weight firmly rooted on the ground.

One piece with built-in holes on its sheath alludes to the Sanskrit's Paramapurusa, literally the Supreme Deity. A playfully designed piece, called "Cosmic Dance" mimics an extraterrestrial creature, playfully doing a pirouette.

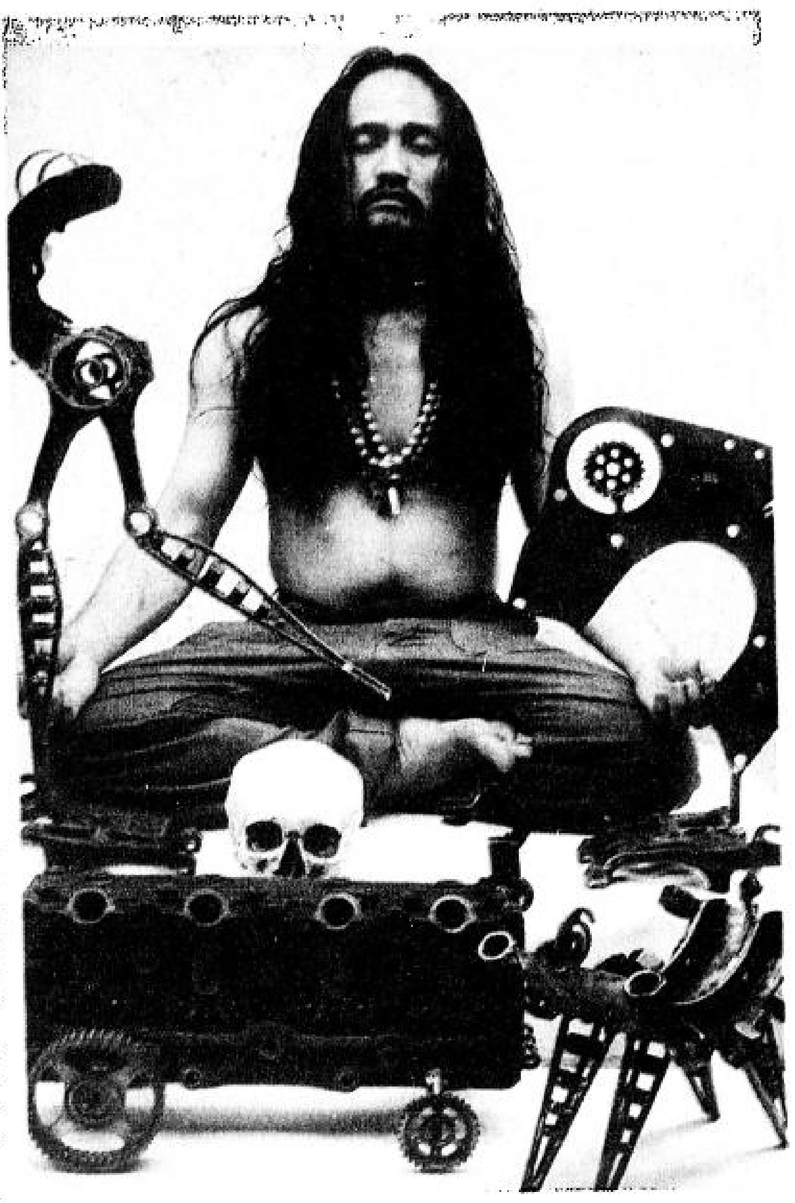
"Mind Travelers" has the uncanny image of a train carriage, complete with wheels to keep it moving.

The pieces rendered in mixed media have a boldly innovative spirit in them, both in the imagery and the courage of articulating ancient wisdom culled from the practice of controlling the mind and its dominion over the body.

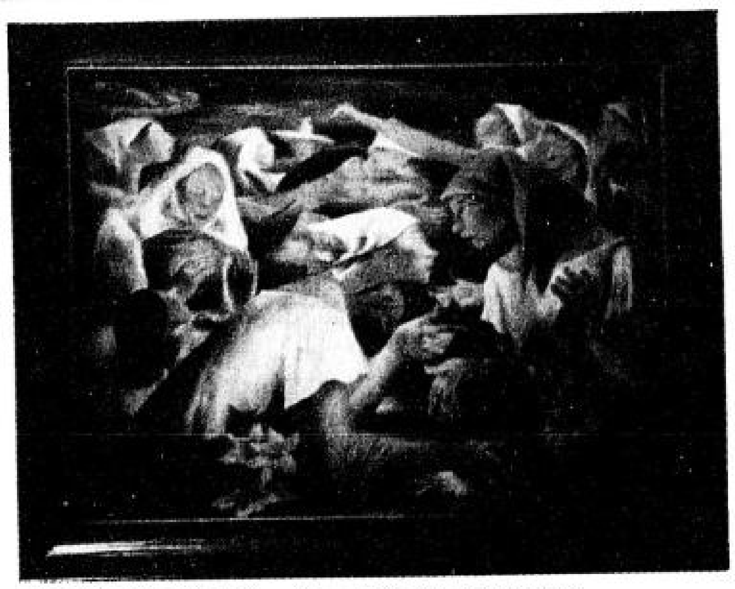
The field has also gone beyond the oppressively gray family, though color is, admittedly, still sparingly applied, with copper now emerging in Cinco's metallic universe.

In these new works, which coincidentally do justice to the gallery's name, being, by turns, both big and small in size and scope, the artist has wisely moved on, intent on pursuing a deeply rooted Eastern philosophy.

A staunch believer in vegetarianism, a devoted yoga disciple and a leading member of the Maharlika Artists and Writers Association and Renaissance Writers & Writers Association, Cinco is a rare breed of contemporary artist, who plumbs the material world for remnants that he transforms into a specimen of strength and spirituality.


FLORENCE Cinco

E-mail author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com


"IN THE MARKET Place," by Anita Magsaysay-Ho

Lopez Museum exhibit tackles femme mystique

PLAYING ON THE IDEA THAT women continue to be associated with vanity and gab, the Lopez Memorial Museum, in collaboration with ABS-CBN Media Asset Management Division opens "Babble, Bauble: Tweaking Femme."

The exhibit inquires into how its own collection figures in light of how females have historically changed the way they look upon themselves and have been looked upon by others.

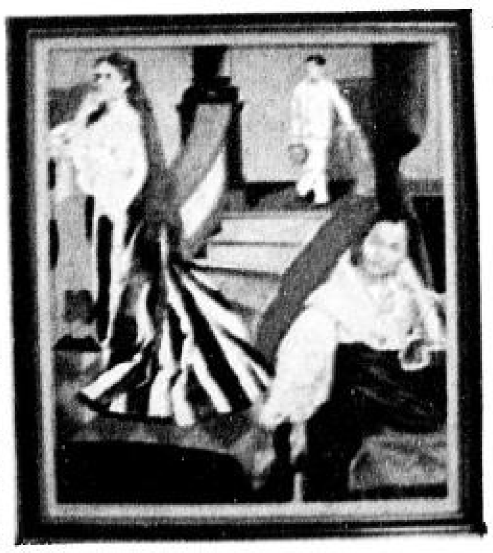
As women have alternately been portrayed as docile virgin, devoted handmaiden, coy flirt, vampy villainess, busty heroine, bored matron and wretched hag, "Babble, Bauble" hopes to invite viewers to find traces of how, over time, females have played up to or resisted being pinned down to types.

The exhibition brings together images of women as represented in classical and modern painting, sculpture, photography, graphic art, film, video, television, theater, dance, church art, pageantry, and daily rituals of work and play.

Visitors will find how multidimensional and complex issues of gender can be read and reread amidst the works of Juan Luna, Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo, Carlos Francisco, Cesar Legaspi, Vicente Manansala, Ang Kiukok, Anita Magsaysay-Ho, Bencab, Romeo Tabuena, Juvenal Sansó, Macario Vitalis, Lee Aguinaldo, Pacita Abad.

A simultaneous exhibition drawn from the Lopez Memorial Library's rich image and publication archive complements the museum's visual art collection.

"Babble, Bauble: Tweaking Femme" runs until Sept. 15. The Lopez Memorial Museum is open daily except Sundays and holidays, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Call 6312417.


ARTWORK by Bencab

Various artists at 'La Musique'

IN CELEBRATION OF NAtional Heritage Month, Galerie Joaquin presents 40 paintings in the show "La Musique IV," from senior artists such as National Artist Arturo Luz, Sansó, Lydia Velasco and Mario Parial, as well as contemporary artists Manny Garibay, Bernard Vista, Dominic Rubio, Jerry Morada, Bayani Ray Acala, Vincent de Pio, Edwin Tres Reyes and members of the Guevarra Group of Artists.

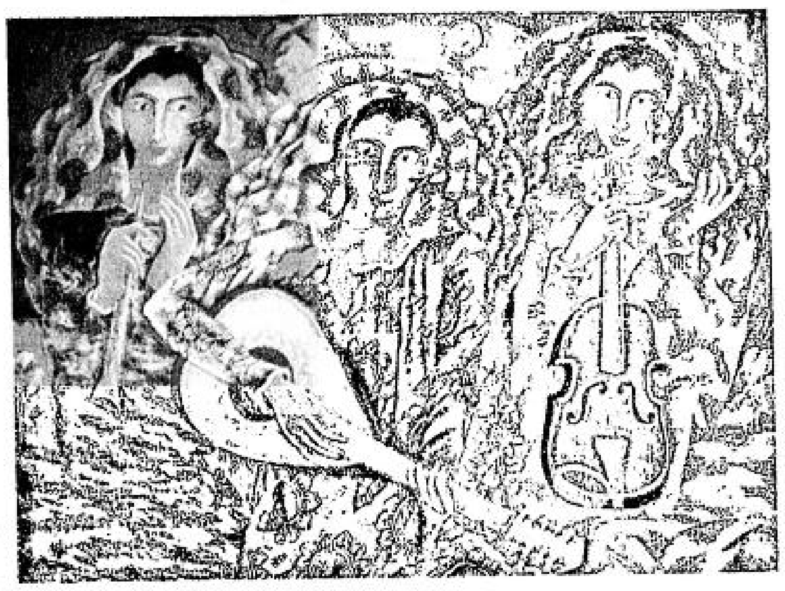
"La Musique IV" is the fourth in a series of annual exhibitions and one of the most popular group shows of Galerie Joaquin. Opening May 16 at 6 p.m. at the Centre Gallery of Galerie Joaquin Main, it pays tribute to music as a powerful and solid expression of the human spirit.

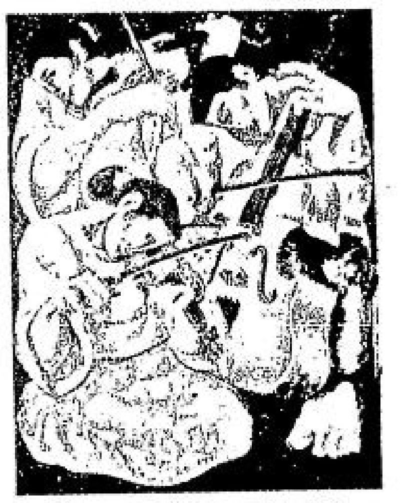
Soprano Josephine Gomez, tenor Frankie Asaniero, pianist Raul Sunico and flutist Sonny Yangco will perform during the opening.

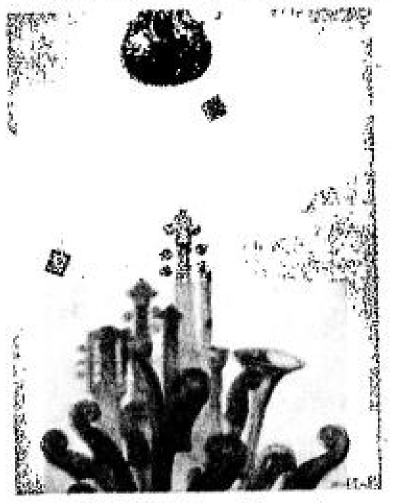
In their works, the artists explore various human emotions uniquely expressed in music.

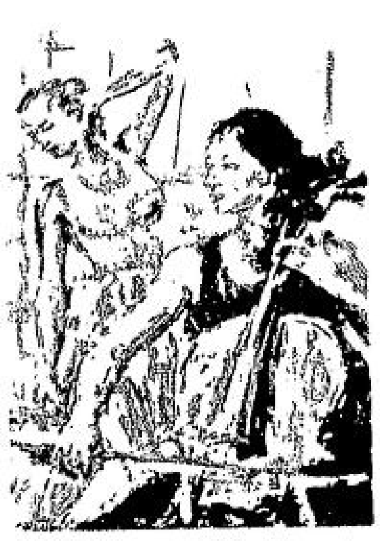
Filipiniana surrealist Morada has four 36" x 48" works including the highly intriguing "Musika," showing only the upper parts of numerous musical instruments.

The Galerie will also be exhibiting two 36" x 36" works by Luz: "Performers: Two Musicians I" and "Performers: Two Musicians II."


"THREE Musicians," by Mario Parial


"ENSEMBLE," by Bernard Vista


"MUSIKA," by Jerry Morada


"PERFORMANCE," by Vincent de Pio

Parial submitted a 36" x 48" work, titled "Three Musicians," in acrylic on canvas.

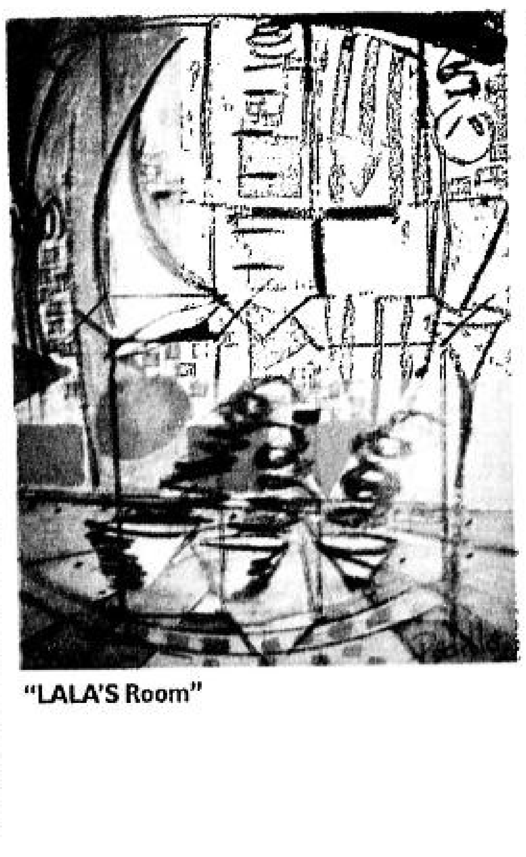
De Pio has three works titled "Black & White Cellist," "Encore," "Performance," and "Two Musicians" done in various sizes.

Vista's works include a 48" x 36" piece titled "Ensemble" and a 40" x 40" "Violin" piece.

Velasco's "La Musique," 48" x 84", shows five women with various musical instruments, under a summer moon.

Galerie Joaquin is at 371 P. Guevarra St. cor. Montessori Lane, Addition Hills, San Juan. Call 7239253, 7239418 or visit www.galeriejoaquin.com

'Room Series' at Milky Way


"LALA'S Room"

MANUEL PADILLA'S "ROOM Series," consisting of paintings in pastel and oil depicting teacups, glasses and lamps, in bold combinations of patterns and colors, will open on May 19, 10:30 a.m., at Milky Way Building, 900 A.S. Arnaiz Ave. (formerly Pasay Road), Makati City. .

Padilla describes his style as spontaneous. He does not use outlines for his paintings. He immediately applies pastel or oil, instinctively rendering figures from his mind. No painting is then the same.

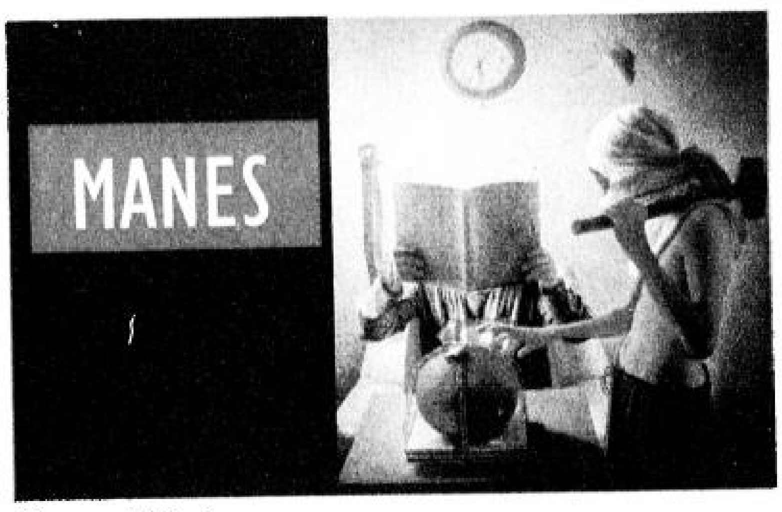
"Each painting is a reflection of my mindset, my mood, my inclination at a particular moment. Since that moment does not happen again, I cannot repeat, or even copy, a certain work," Padilla said.

The exhibit is for the benefit of the breast cancer awareness program of the Essenses Foundation.

Call 0915-2762358 or e-mail mannypdll@yahoo.com

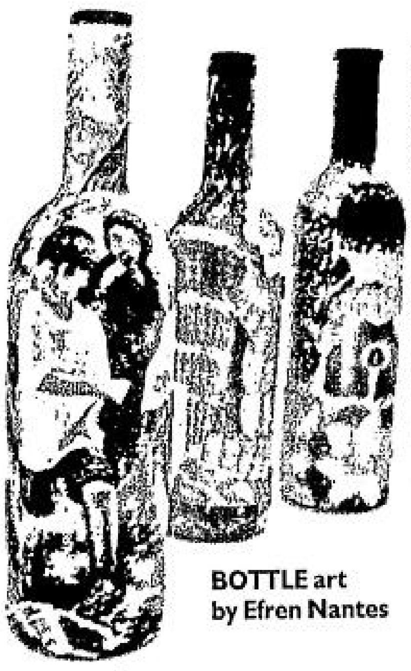
MANUEL Padilla

VISUAL ARTS



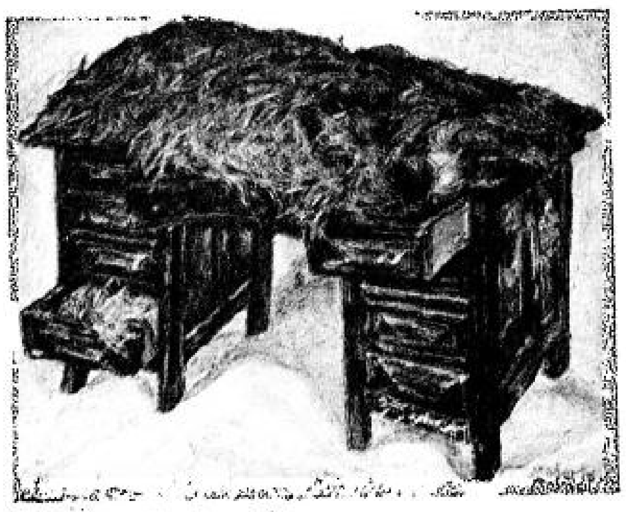
Manes at West

West Gallery at Megamall presents "Idiomatic Expressions," Lotsu Manes' first one-man exhibit, May 18-30. The exhibit will feature mostly oil-on-canvas works and one in mixed media, which try to breathe life and irony into some famous Filipino proverbs. Call 6341284.


BOTTLE art by Efren Nantes

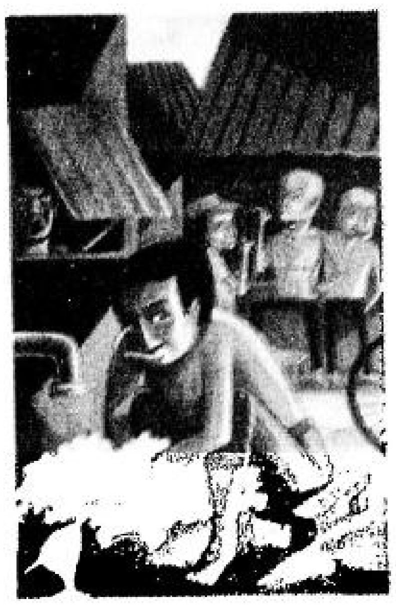
Nantes at Avellana

Opening today in Avellana Art Gallery is "Daan Dito," the latest exhibit by Efren Nantes, known for painting his subjects on used wine bottles. This time, the artist renders on his unlikely canvas idyllic scenery, children engrossed in traditional games and the riotous colors of Pahiyas of his hometown, Lucban, which incidentally celebrates its feast day today. Original, highly detailed and sensitive to the material, Nantes' works offer a new vista in the Filipino countryside and imagination. Avellana Art Gallery is at A-19, 2680 F.B. Harrison St., Pasay City (fronting Gideon Academy). Call 8338357.


"OFFICE Desk Hay After A.T.," by Elaine Roberto-Navas

Navas at Finale

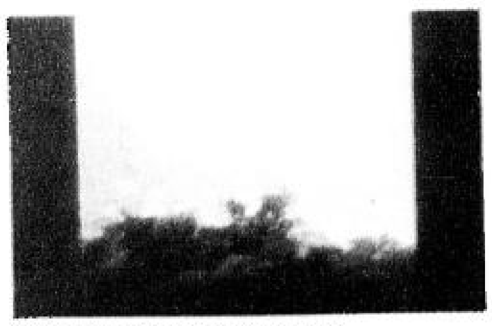
On view until May 30 in Finale Art Gallery (4/F SM Megamall Bldg. A, Mandaluyong City) is Elaine Roberto-Navas' "Artifacts." The artist approximates the history and story which everyday objects—chairs, desks, bath tubs—accumulate through rhythmic, well-calculated strokes and ponderous colors. Basically still-lifes, her paintings merit close attention for the sensuousness of their details and haunting tone of domesticity. Call 6342411.


"ARIEL, Isang Babad Ka Lang Kay Perla," by Rodel Tapaya

Tapaya at Boston

Boston Gallery features "Looban" by young artist Rodel Tapaya until June 7. "Looban" is a series of acrylics on burlap portraying daily life in an urban informal community. Tapaya, who studied painting at the University of the Philippines, chose Barangay Krus na Ligas for his subject. Krus na Ligas, which lies at the edge of UP property, is popular for its watering holes, cheap eateries, and even small rooms and bed spaces for students and a few faculty. Boston Gallery is at 72 Boston St., Lantana, Cubao, QC. Call 7229205.

Jemina at Power Plant Mall

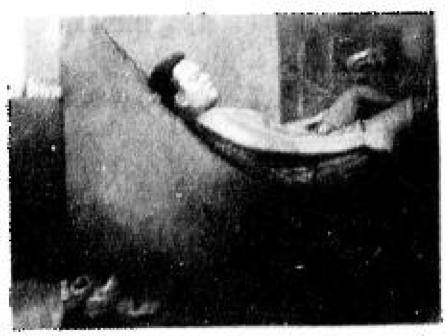

"BAGUIO," acrylic on canvas

JEMINA mounts her 11th solo exhibit at the R1 Bridgeways of Power Plant Mall, Rockwell, May 20-June 2. "Sentimental Journey" is the first of a series of exhibits presented by Power Plant Mall and Yellow'Door Gallery, and is a collection of paintings on canvas depicting Philippine landscapes. Opening cocktails will be held on May 20, 6 p.m.

After receiving a scholarship and graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Santa Barbara in 1992, Jemina has pursued a flourishing art career on the local art scene, having held 10 solo exhibitions in art institutions such as the Lopez Museum Gallery and the Ayala Museum. She has also participated in various group exhibitions in the Philippines and in the United States. Call 0920-9624347 or e-mail yellowdoorgallery@gmail.com.

Esquillo, Borsoto at Nineveh

NINEVEH ARTSPACE will open four art exhibits: Asean Art awardee Alfredo Dorado Esquillo Jr.'s "Pasyonista," on May 21-June 12; "Lying on the Analyst's Couch" by Lawrence Borsoto; "Buhay at Hugis Paete" by Lino Dalay; and Roel Paz Salvatierra and Ser Brave Singh's two-man show "Why Pamper Life's Complexities." Esquillo and Borsoto are award-winning artists who studied at the UST College of Fine Arts. Nineveh Artspace is at 2452 1st Ave., Villa Silangan Subd., Sta. Cruz, Laguna. Call (049) 8086617 or (049) 8106315.


"PURPOSELESSNESS at Citihomes," by Lawrence Borsoto

Free kiddie art workshops

Faber-Castell announces its series of free art workshops for children aged 5-12 at SM City Cagayan de Oro in Mindanao. The workshops include pencil-making and creative video showing, May 15. Slots are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Call 3617391 to 92.

Workshops by Art Informal

Art Informal, an alternative center for artistic learning, is holding workshops run by professional Filipino artists and art managers such as Salvador Alonday (sculpture), Jojo Ballo (creativity), José Santos III and Erwin Leaño (painting), and Pamela Yan-Santos (children's art). The curriculum and workshops are designed to address developing creativity while teaching the fundamentals of drawing, painting, sculpture, pottery and children's art. Art Informal is at 277 Connecticut St., East Greenhills, Mandaluyong City. Call 7258518 or e-mail artinformal@yahoo.com.

Fund-raising show

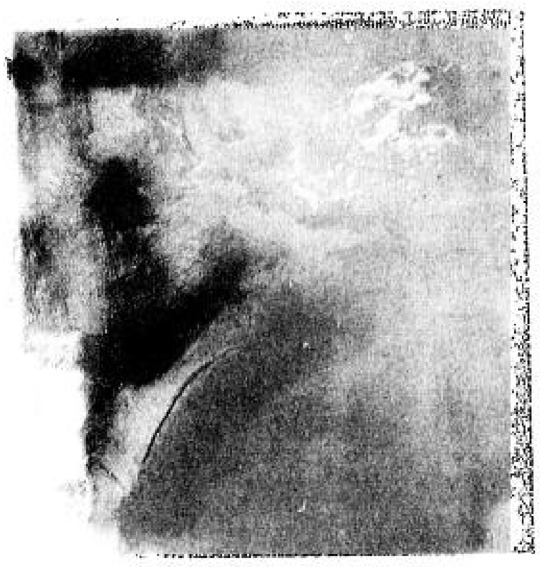
LA Workshop Gallery's exhibit, "Artjam for Street Kids," runs until May 17. It features donated works by leading artists from the South. The proceeds will help the street children of BF de la Rama. The exhibit was inspired by George Harrison's "Concert for Bangladesh," which raised funds for starving children. LA Workshop Gallery is at 66 G. Puyat St., BF Homes Phase 1. Call 8077624 or 8425200.

Creative process at Mag:Net

Mag:Net Gallery Katipunan displays the act and process of painting in the month-long group show "Painting in Progress." It features paintings by Alex Aguilar, Amy Aragon, Bembol de la Cruz, Ranelle Dial, Carlo Gernale, Lea Lim, Jay Ticar and Alvin Villaruel. The ST Exposure group and Kidkat de Guia will document the exhibition, which opens on May 16, 6:30 p.m., and runs until May 31. Call 9293191 or visit www.mag-net.com.ph.

Picana at Crucible

Tessie Picana mounts her first exhibit at Crucible Gallery, May 16-28. The exhibit will feature 20 paintings in oil, acrylic and watercolor on both paper and canvas. Call 8173304.



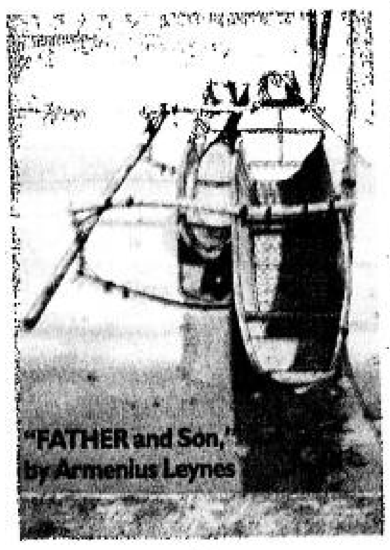
Chigo Cruz at Hues

Chigo Cruz presents her first one-woman show at Gallery Hues in MC Home Depot, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig. The exhibit features pieces with splashes and streaks of mixed media over a predominantly white background. Call 8173304.

"SYMPHONY of Colors," by Chigo Cruz

Sikat artists at Contreras

The Sikat Group of Artists presents an exhibit until May 24 in Contreras Sculptures in SM Megamall. The exhibit showcases various media such as painting, sculpture and ceramics. Founded in 1998, Sikat (acronym for Sining, Kulay at Tinta) has organized art contests, conducted art workshops and given free art lessons to people from all walks of life, majority of which are underprivileged children and the elderly.


"FATHER and Son," by Armenius Leynes

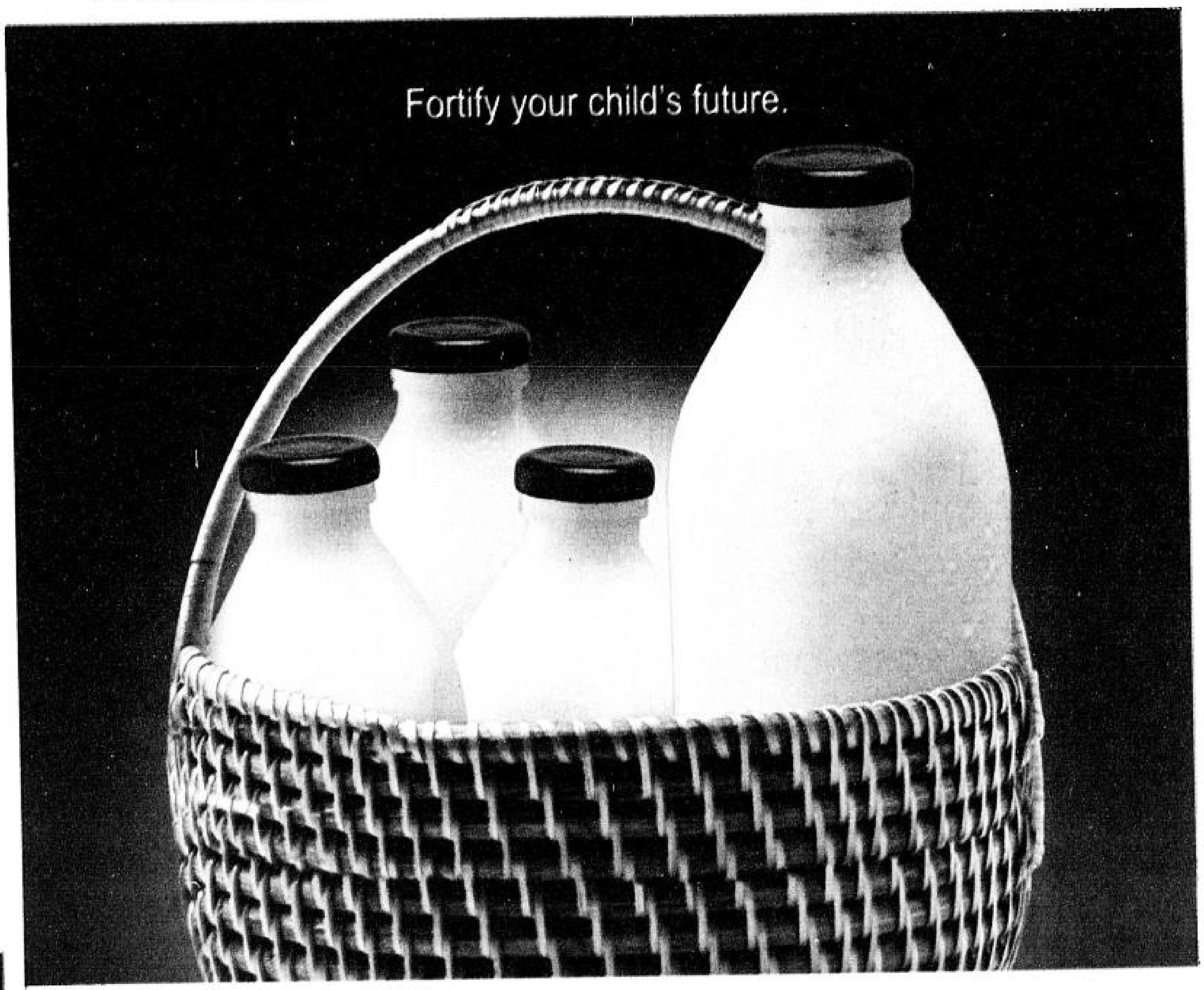
Leynes at Hiraya

Hiraya Gallery presents "Tales from the Bancas," Filipino artist Armenius Leynes' one-man exhibit which will run May 27-June 14. A self-developed artist, Leynes renders his objects in cool-looking shimmers of mixed acrylic paints of blue, yellow, brown and red. Hiraya Gallery is at 530 UN Ave., Ermita, Manila. Call 5233331.

JOE Datuin

Datuin at CCP

Abstractionist Joe Datuin will hold his 17th solo exhibit at Pasilyo Edades, Cultural Center of the Philippines, on May 18-June 25. The exhibit, which coincides with the artist's 50th birthday, features his recent works in acrylic on canvas and stainless-steel sculptures. Call 8323702.



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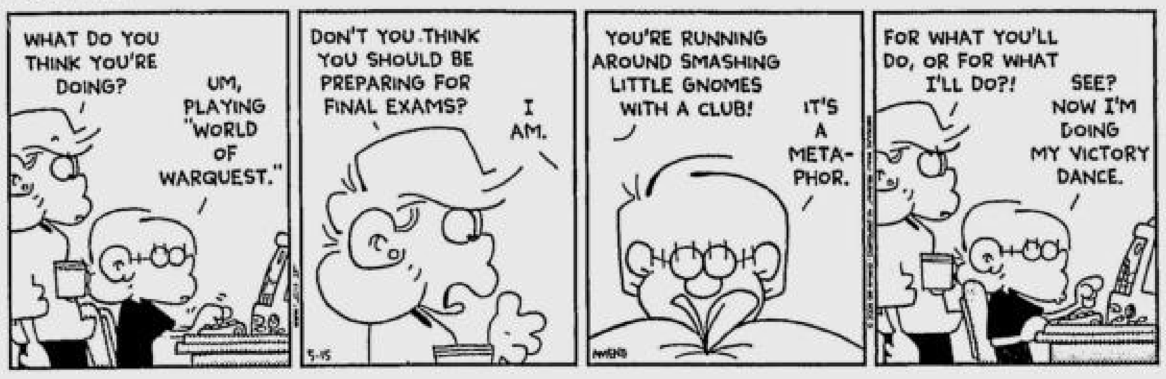
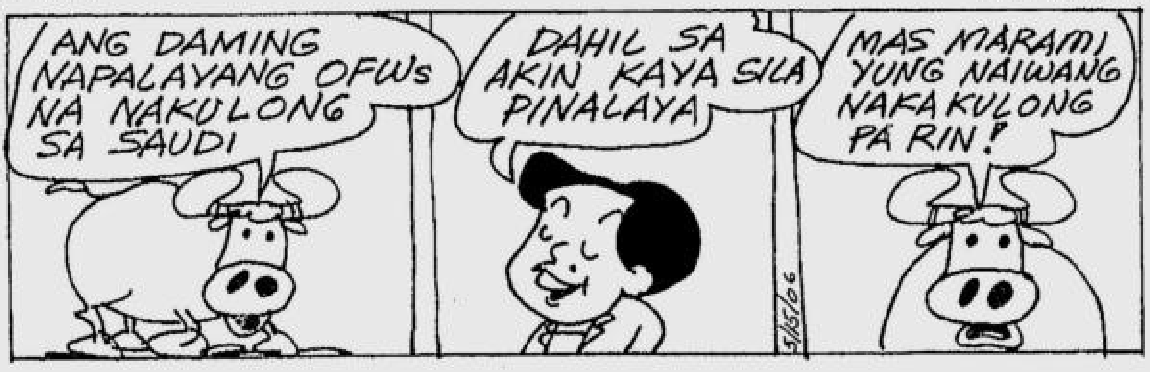
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?
UM, PLAYING "WORLD OF WARQUEST."
DON'T YOU THINK YOU SHOULD BE PREPARING FOR FINAL EXAMS?
I AM.
5-15
YOU'RE RUNNING AROUND SMASHING LITTLE GNOMES WITH A CLUB!
IT'S A METAPHOR.
AMEND
FOR WHAT YOU'LL DO, OR FOR WHAT I'LL DO?!
SEE? NOW I'M DOING MY VICTORY DANCE.

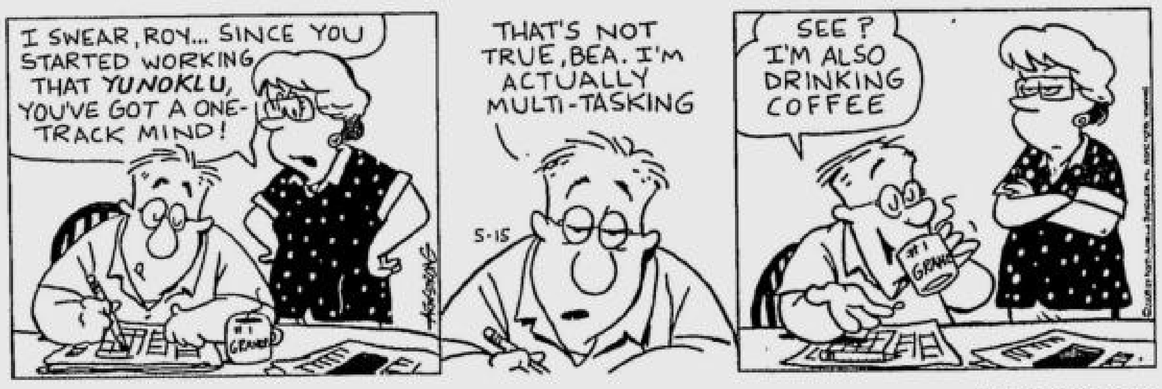
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


ANG DAMING NAPALAYANG OFWs NA NAKULONG SA SAUDI
DAHIL SA AKIN KAYA SILA PINALAYA
5/15/06
MAS MARAMI YUNG NAIWANG NAKAKULONG PA RIN!

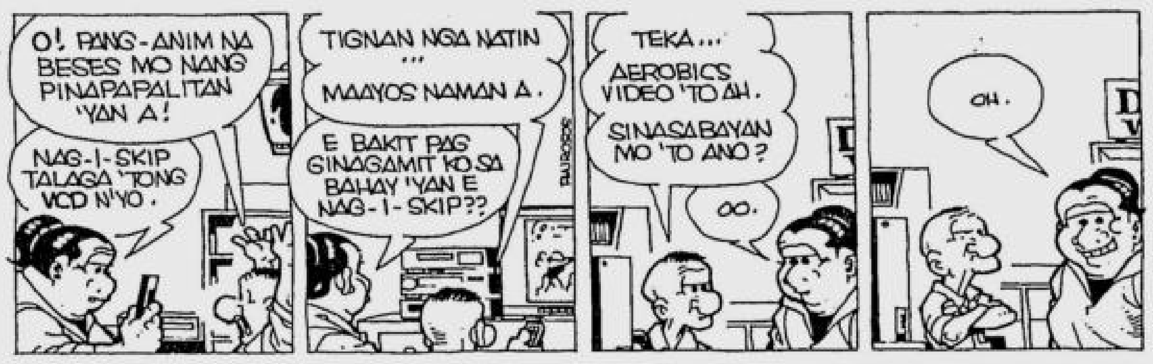
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I SWEAR, ROY... SINCE YOU STARTED WORKING THAT YUNOKLU, YOU'VE GOT A ONE-TRACK MIND!
#1 GRAMPS
THAT'S NOT TRUE, BEA. I'M ACTUALLY MULTI-TASKING
5-15
SEE? I'M ALSO DRINKING COFFEE

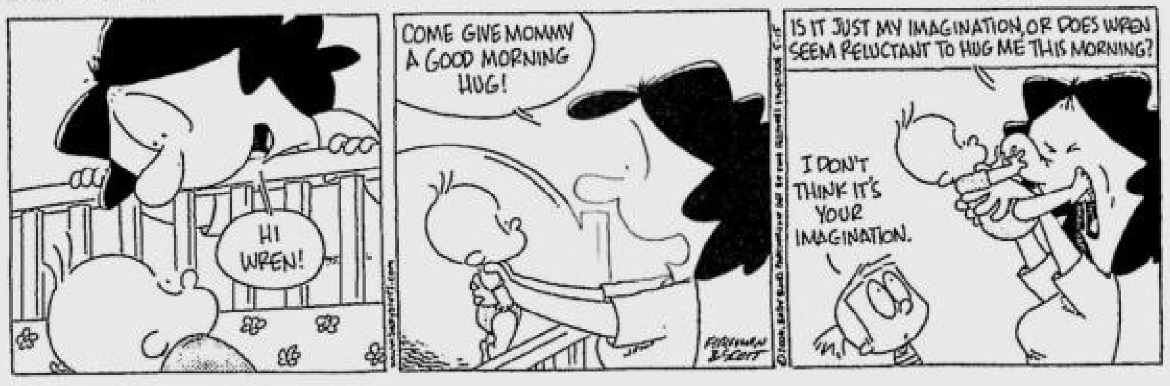
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


O! PANG-ANIM NA BESES MO NANG PINAPAPALITAN 'YAN A!
NAG-I-SKIP TALAGA 'TONG VCD N'YO.
TIGNAN NGA NATIN ...
MAAYOS NAMAN A.
E BAKIT PAG GINAGAMIT KO SA BAHAY 'YAN E NAG-I-SKIP??
TEKA...
AEROBICS VIDEO 'TO AH.
SINASABAYAN MO 'TO ANO?
OO.
OH.

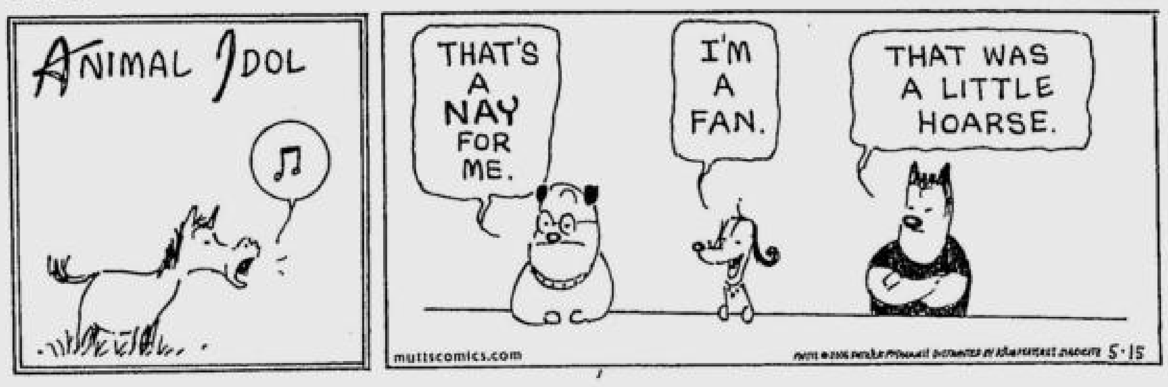
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


HI WREN!
COME GIVE MOMMY A GOOD MORNING HUG!
IS IT JUST MY IMAGINATION, OR DOES WREN SEEM RELUCTANT TO HUG ME THIS MORNING?
I DON'T THINK IT'S YOUR IMAGINATION.

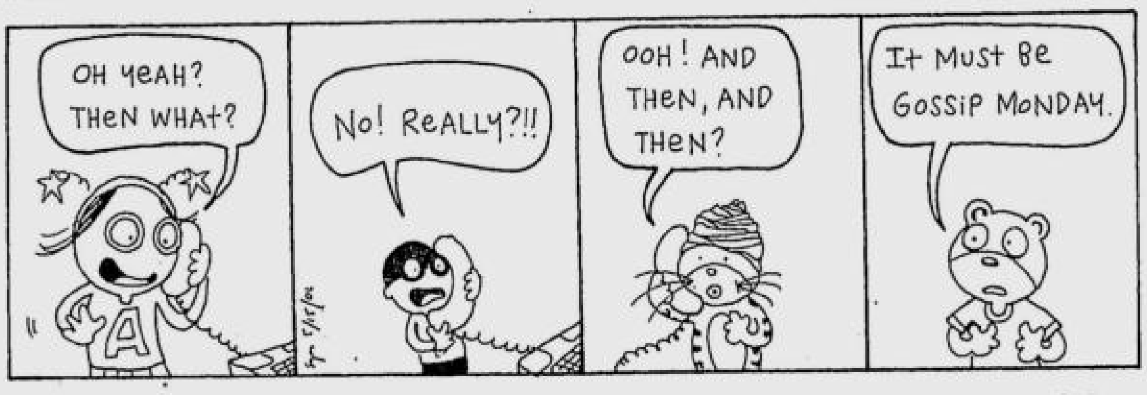
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


ANIMAL IDOL
♫
THAT'S A NAY FOR ME.
I'M A FAN.
THAT WAS A LITTLE HOARSE.
muttscomics.com
5·15

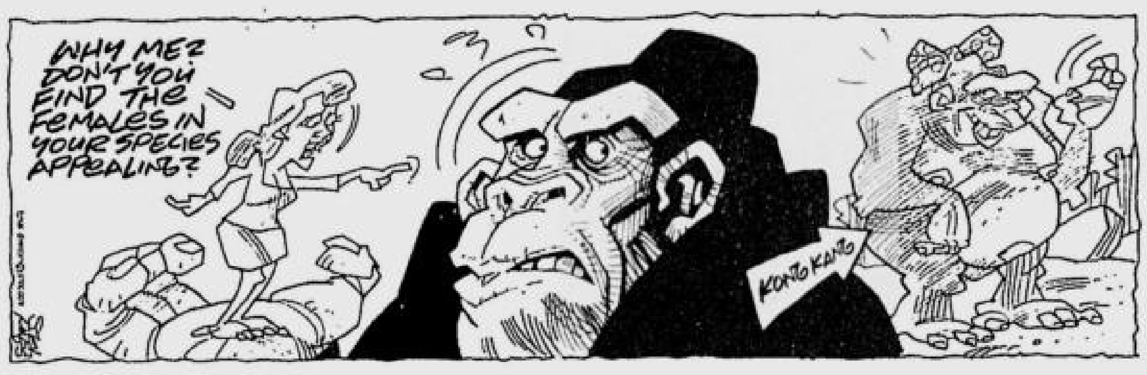
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


OH YEAH? THEN WHAT?
A
NO! REALLY?!!
OOH! AND THEN, AND THEN?
IT MUST BE GOSSIP MONDAY.

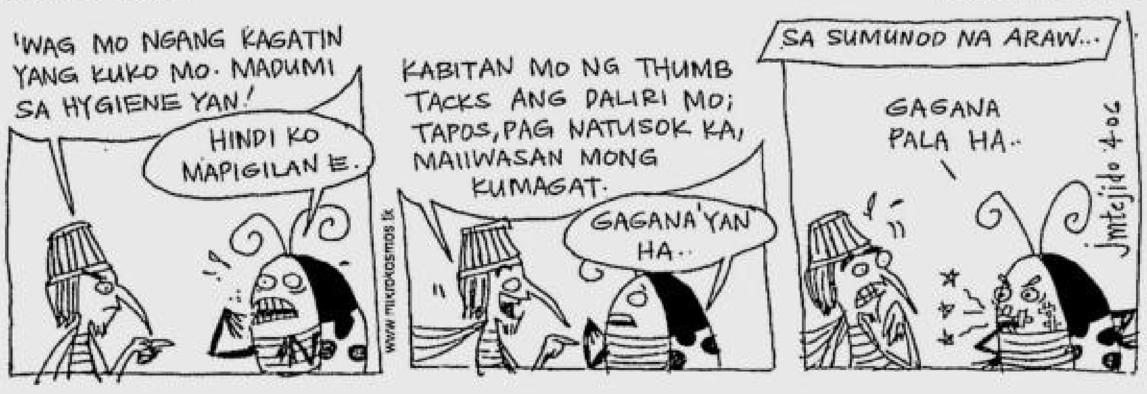
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


WHY ME? DON'T YOU FIND THE FEMALES IN YOUR SPECIES APPEALING?
KONG KANG

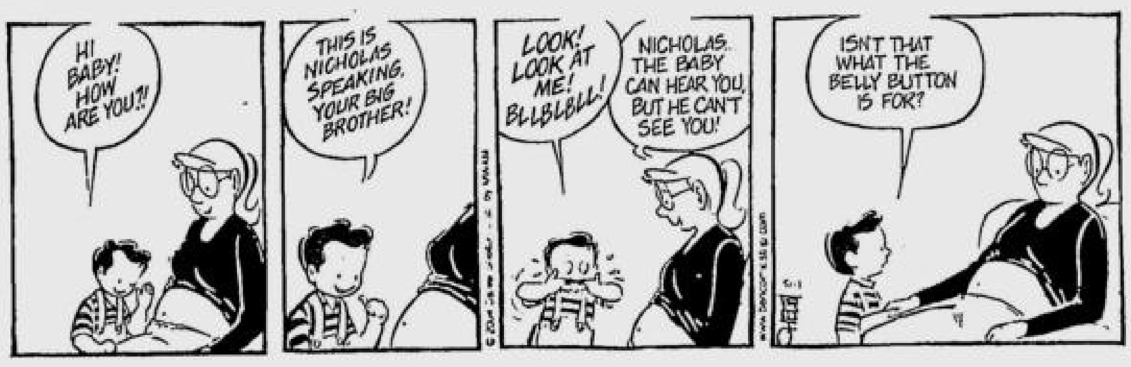
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


'WAG MO NGANG KAGATIN YANG KUKO MO. MADUMI SA HYGIENE YAN!
HINDI KO MAPIGILAN E.
www.mikrokosmos.tk
KABITAN MO NG THUMB TACKS ANG DALIRI MO; TAPOS, PAG NATUSOK KA, MAIIWASAN MONG KUMAGAT.
GAGANA 'YAN HA..
SA SUMUNOD NA ARAW...
GAGANA PALA HA..
Jmtejido 4-06

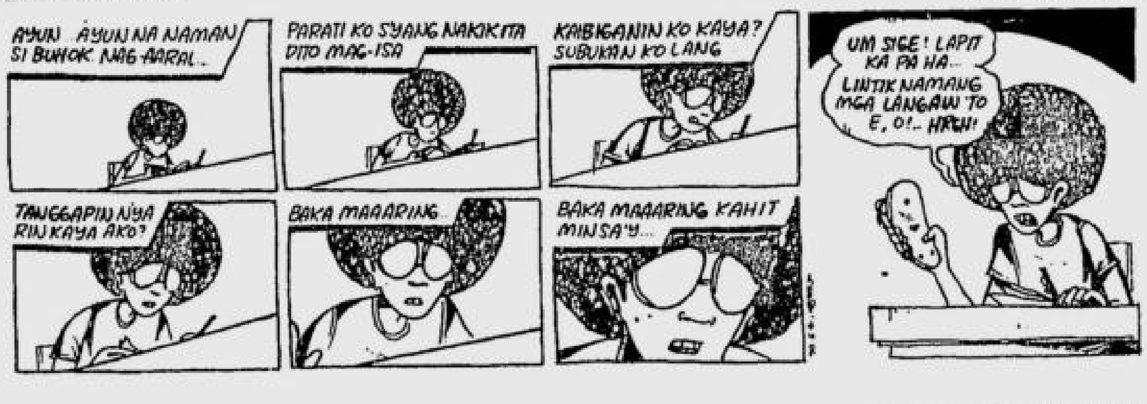
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


HI BABY! HOW ARE YOU?!
THIS IS NICHOLAS SPEAKING. YOUR BIG BROTHER!
LOOK! LOOK AT ME! BLLBLBLL!
NICHOLAS. THE BABY CAN HEAR YOU, BUT HE CAN'T SEE YOU!
ISN'T THAT WHAT THE BELLY BUTTON IS FOR?

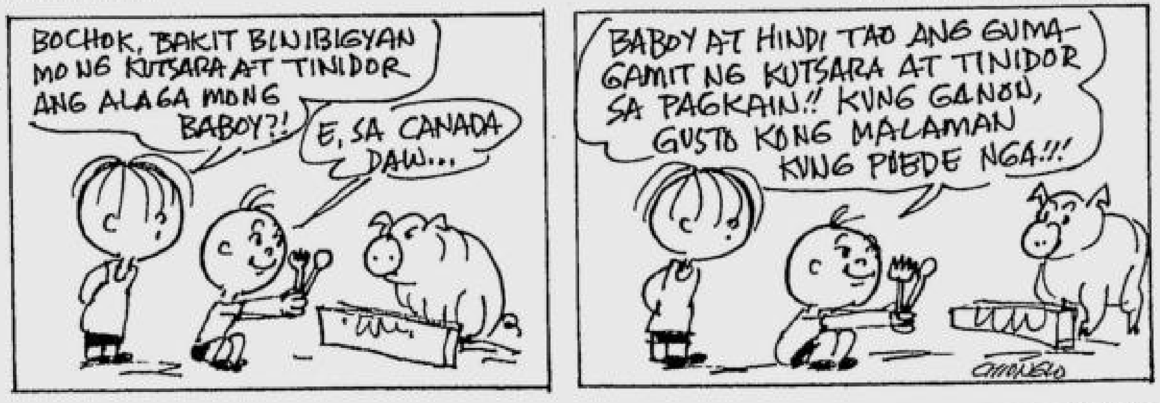
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


AYUN. AYUN NA NAMAN SI BUHOK. NAG-AARAL..
PARATI KO SYANG NAKIKITA DITO MAG-ISA
KAIBIGANIN KO KAYA? SUBUKAN KO LANG
TANGGAPIN NYA RIN KAYA AKO?
BAKA MAAARING...
BAKA MAAARING KAHIT MINSA'Y...
UM SIGE! LAPIT KA PA HA... LINTIK NAMANG MGA LANGAW 'TO E, O!.. HAH!

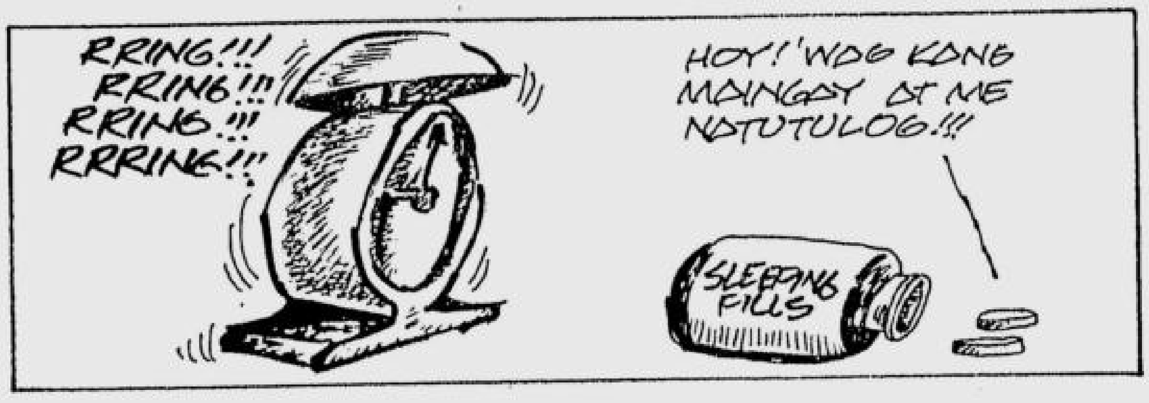
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


BOCHOK, BAKIT BINIBIGYAN MO NG KUTSARA AT TINIDOR ANG ALAGA MONG BABOY?!
E, SA CANADA DAW...
BABOY AT HINDI TAO ANG GUMAGAMIT NG KUTSARA AT TINIDOR SA PAGKAIN!! KUNG GANON, GUSTO KONG MALAMAN KUNG PWEDE NGA!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


RRING!!!
RRING!!!
RRING!!!
RRRING!!!
HOY! 'WAG KANG MAINGAY AT ME NATUTULOG!!!
SLEEPING PILLS

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're original and persuasive. People listen to your imaginative ideas. Paradoxically, you often appear to be quite ordinary. You work well with groups, and also very well alone. You often moonlight in very different jobs because of your wide range of interests. In your 40s, home and family become more meaningful to you. This year is full of exciting, new beginnings!

Birthdate of: Jamie-Lynn DiScala, actress; L. Frank Baum, writer; George Brett, baseballer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You're unusually concerned with cash flow right now. (Why is there always so much month left at the end of the money?) Think about what you really need and want.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): It is still all about you, dear Taurus. Don't be afraid to put yourself first now. With the Sun in your sign, you need to reenergize and replenish your strength for the year.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Try to get more rest. Work behind the scenes if you can. This is your time to do some serious thinking about your new year ahead.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): It's a popular time! Enjoy activities with friends and groups. Join clubs. It's important to discuss your hopes and dreams for the future with others. (Get their input.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): No matter what you do lately, you seem to be in the public eye more than usual. Fortunately, you can handle this. Look your best; first impressions say a lot.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You're eager to learn and explore something new. You're tired of the same old, same old. You want something fresh and different! Register for a course. Plan to take a trip. Break up your routine.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You're very involved with the wealth of others now. Perhaps you're sharing something or working with a partner. Research will pay off.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): With the Sun as far from you as it gets all year, you might be a bit tired. Try to get more sleep this week. Listen to what others have to say.

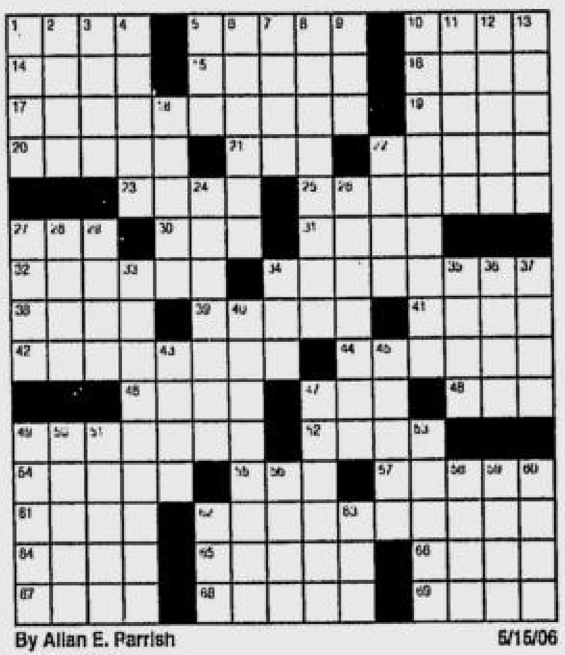
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Since you have a lot of energy now to get organized, get busy! Make hay while the sun shines. Reorganize things at work and at home.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): There's a time for work, and there's a time for play. This week is the perfect time for play for your sign! Get out and enjoy yourself.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Home and family are a very strong focus for you now. You might be able to help a family member. If so, consider it a welcome opportunity.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Your busy pace continues. Short trips, wheeling and dealing, negotiations, plus increased buying and selling all keep you on the run!

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Allan E. Parrish
Mentor, OH

5/15/06

ACROSS

1 Cuzco's country
5 Honda competitor
10 Floating jail
14 PC image
15 Steer clear of
16 Vegas rival
17 Legendary Sioux chief
19 Biblical preposition
20 Sound reproduction
21 Hip dude
22 Exploiters
23 Brownish purple
25 Castle passage
27 Twelve doz.
30 Large vessel
31 Part of SASE
32 Double-edged sword
34 Reached
38 Puts on years
39 Word to follow 17A, 62A, 10D, and 33D
41 Demolish
42 Voice amplifier
44 Food Network celeb
46 Merit
47 Golf norm
48 Foldaway bed
49 Canon rival
52 Marking time
54 Catch a whiff of
55 Fr. woman's title
57 Graceland man
61 Consider
62 Conservative columnist
64 Killer whale
65 Writer Gide
66 Director Kazan
67 "Nana" star Anna
68 Harden
69 Ooze

DOWN

1 Type size
2 Stocking shade
3 Word with rage or gang
4 Open a jacket
5 __-jongg
6 Tropical shorebird
7 Novelist __ Neale Hurston
8 Revulsion
9 Fruit drink
10 Minor crisis
11 Extend a subscription
12 Mural starter?
13 Scatterbrained
18 "__ Got Mail"
22 Pac-10 sch.
24 Minimal garage
26 Used tire
27 Seize
28 Italian sauce
29 Autobahn auto
33 Land in the Irish Sea
34 Barley bristle
35 Pusher's pursuer
36 Pinza of "South Pacific"
37 Shoulder muscle, briefly
40 Christmas tree decoration
43 Fifty percent
45 Bobbettes hit
47 Coyote State capital
49 Precursor to Windows
50 Not moving
51 Sister's daughter
53 Cary of "The Princess Bride"
56 Fashion
58 Disgusting
59 Nastase of tennis
60 Sharp rebuke
62 Ford fuel
63 Set

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

S	C	A	G	■	T	A	K	E	S	P	L	A	C	E
M	O	N	A	■	O	P	E	R	A	S	E	R	I	A
A	D	A	R	■	T	E	E	N	T	I	T	A	N	S
R	E	L	A	T	F	■	P	E	A	S	■	B	E	Y
T	I	O	G	A	■	J	E	S	T	■	L	I	M	O
E	N	G	E	L	B	E	R	T	■	P	E	C	A	N
D	E	S	S	E	R	T	S	■	G	R	E	A	S	E
■	■	■	A	N	I	S	■	P	R	O	D	■	■	■
S	V	E	L	T	E	■	B	E	R	G	E	R	A	C
P	I	L	E	S	■	I	A	L	S	E	F	A	C	E
A	D	O	S	■	O	L	D	E	■	N	O	V	E	L
R	A	P	■	E	B	A	N	■	G	Y	R	A	T	E
E	L	E	C	T	O	R	A	T	E	■	E	G	O	S
M	I	R	A	C	L	E	M	A	N	■	S	E	N	T
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5/15/06

Metaphysical painting and Conceptual painting

By Constantino C. Tejero

OF THE SALINGPUSA group of artists, Erwin Leaño's art appears to stand apart.

First, of course, is the looks of the respective paintings, specifically the high contrast between their works' nervous visual energy and his serene imagery. While they deploy vigorous brushwork of violent strokes and vitriolic hues, Leaño employs clean lines and muted color tones.

Their expressionistic tendency is diametrically opposed to his classical sense of form. While their image-making does not aspire to a photographic realism, his images look real but pushed just a bit farther to the borderline of realism it verges on the surreal.

Second is their choice of subjects. While the Antipolo-based, University of the Philippines-educated Salingpusa is generally associated with Social Realist concerns, Leaño would stand out among his colleagues as chiefly a formalist.

Zen is what one would immediately associate with his spare monochromatic imagery, but there's still another that's vaguely even suspected—that early-20th century Italian art movement called Pittura Metafisica.

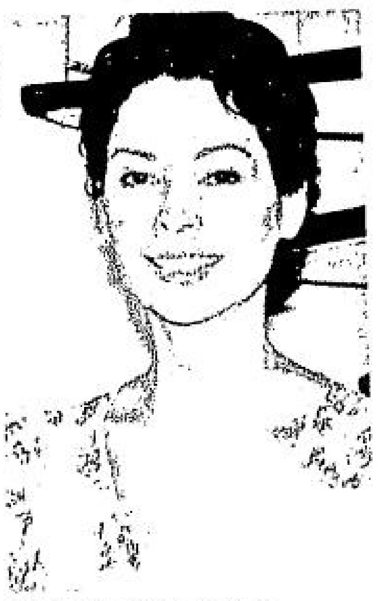
Leaño's still lifes of bowls and plates, jars and vases, cups and mugs wouldn't look incongruous if mixed with the bottles and pitchers of Giorgio Morandi. His paintings have an eccentric classicism that holds some mysterious power, akin to the works of the *scuola metafisica*.

It now appears he is approaching closer to that school with his latest show "Familiar Territories," six pieces in oil on canvas, recently in West Gallery at the Artwalk, L/4, Bldg. A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City.

Hidden meanings

Ostensibly, these untitled pieces are just banal images—of buildings' façades, their exteriors of doors, windows, walls, steps, and the street's sidewalk and pavement—revealing the artist's fascination with architecture. But the rendering is something else.

With just starkly rendered architectural details, empty spaces, earth color, deep perspective, the artist has produced highly evocative pieces that seem to seek hidden meanings beyond surface appearances.



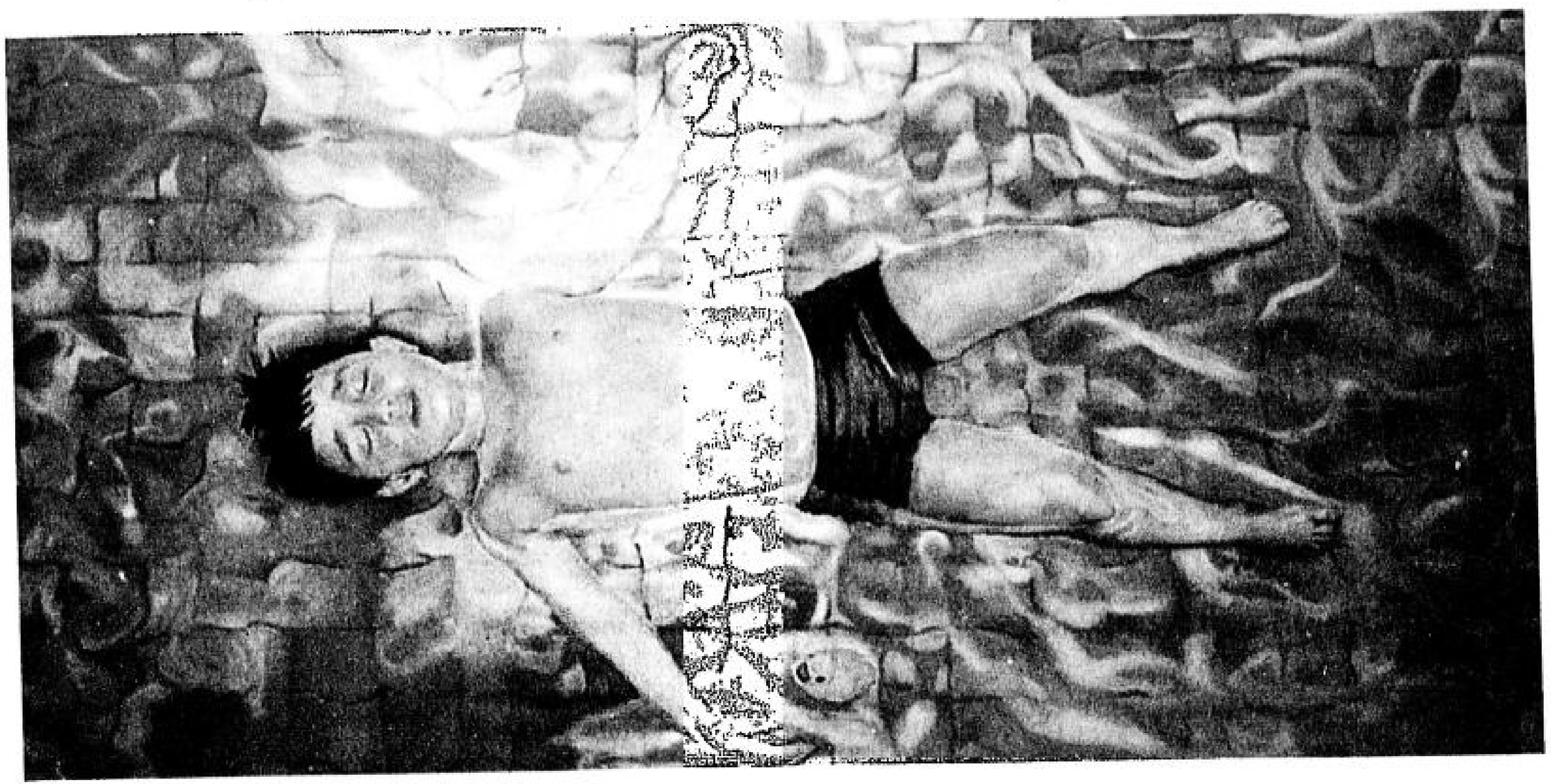
SANDRA Fabie-Gfeller

This, of course, points to the art of Giorgio de Chirico. Think of the mysterious streets and empty squares, buildings and arcades in "The Enigma of a Day," "The Anxious Journey," "The Uncertainty of the Poet," or, most famously, "The Mystery and Melancholy of a Street."

De Chirico and Carlo Carrà's stated aim in founding Metaphysical Painting was "to depict an alternative reality which engages most immediately with the unconscious mind." Though short-lived, the movement is thought to provide "significant impetus for the development of Dada and Surrealism."

Leaño may not have the same intention, and an alternative logic or illogical reality may be far from his mind while painting—but these pieces produce a similar cryptic atmosphere and disquieting effect on the viewer as those of De Chirico's.

Concentrating on quiet structures, with no hint of living things, the artist has created a ghost town. That certainly goes beyond mere formalism.



"LEARN to Float," by Sandra Fabie-Gfeller

Fresh treatment

If there's a Metaphysical painting, there's also such a thing as a Conceptual one. The paintings integrated into the esoteric installations of Roberto Chabet immediately come to mind, but we're talking of a painting that is itself the concept.

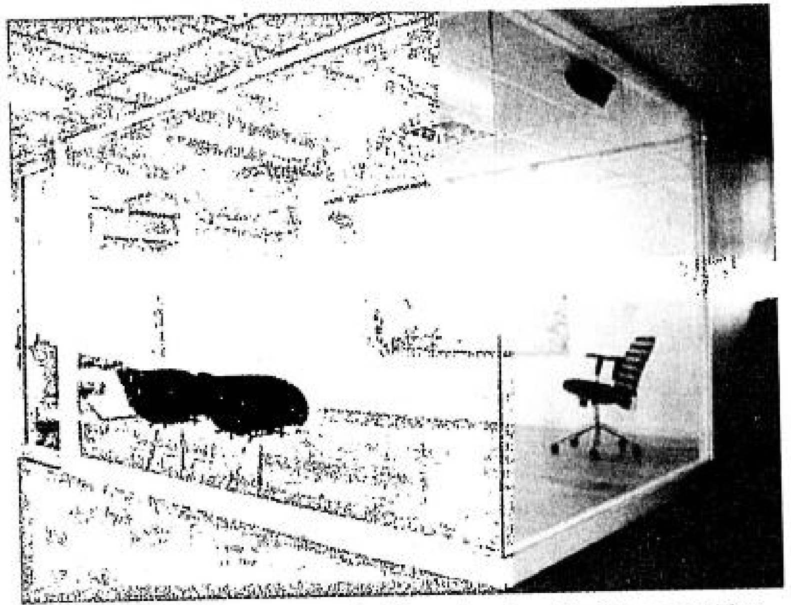
This is finely illustrated by Sandra Fabie-Gfeller's "Learn to Float," a 4 ft x 8 ft piece in oil on canvas, recently displayed in Ar.I.A.s. (Artists-Run Independent Art Space), 3/F, Suite 318-A, LRI Business Plaza, Nicanor Garcia Street (formerly Reposo), Bel Air II, Makati City.

The huge image of a boy floating on water didn't fail to grab the attention of visitors the moment they stepped on the third floor of the building. With eyes closed, the beatific boy looks as if asleep on the cool, crystal-clear, undulating water, so lost to the summer heat outside.

Bobby Nuestro, director of A.r.I.A.s. and himself an accomplished artist, enthuses about the large-scale painting: "The compositional treatment is very new and fresh. The handling of the medium is very delicate, and yet you can feel a sense of rawness in uncontrolled strokes, as if it were an out-of-focus digital shot—the water so blue yet so soft and supple.

"Looking beyond the elements and medium, it does not reflect the old painting process or execution or the normal choosing of subject. Rather, it suggests, more than anything, painting with conceptual underpinnings."

Getting inspiration from Parisian salons, Nuestro has launched a one-work, one-artist exhibition project for his art space (which he hesitates to call an art gallery). Gfeller's piece was the second in a series of six.



ARTISTS-RUN Independent Art Space has launched the novel idea of a one-work, one-artist exhibition.

Value of space

Nuestro warms up to the novel idea of only one artwork being exhibited for two weeks. For one, the piece gets the undivided attention of gallery-goers and the full concentration of art lovers that a work of art deserves.

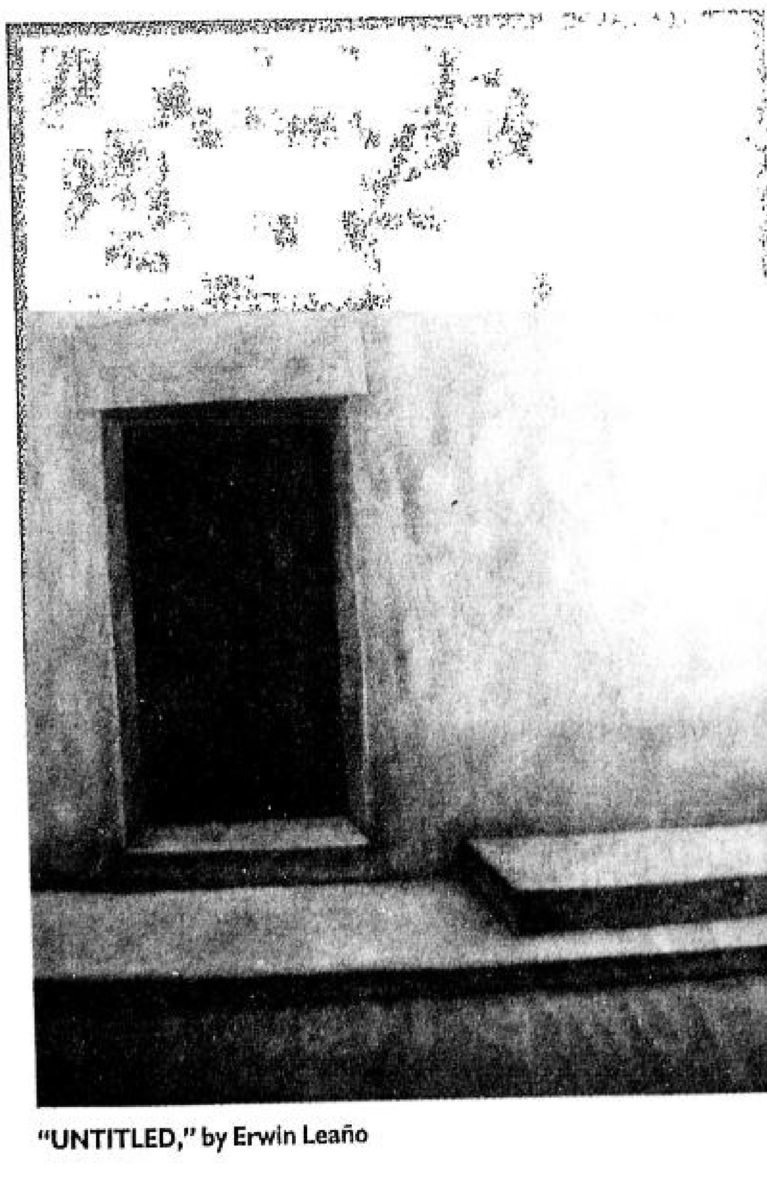
For another, the impetus to exhibit would encourage artists to come up with the best they can, something that can stand alone and hold viewers' interest through two weeks. Then there is the value of space.

Gfeller's painting, rendered in brilliant primary and secondary colors, occupies the central wall and dominates the room yet paradoxically expands one's sense of space. Being alone, although large, it lends an illusion of spaciousness to the small room.

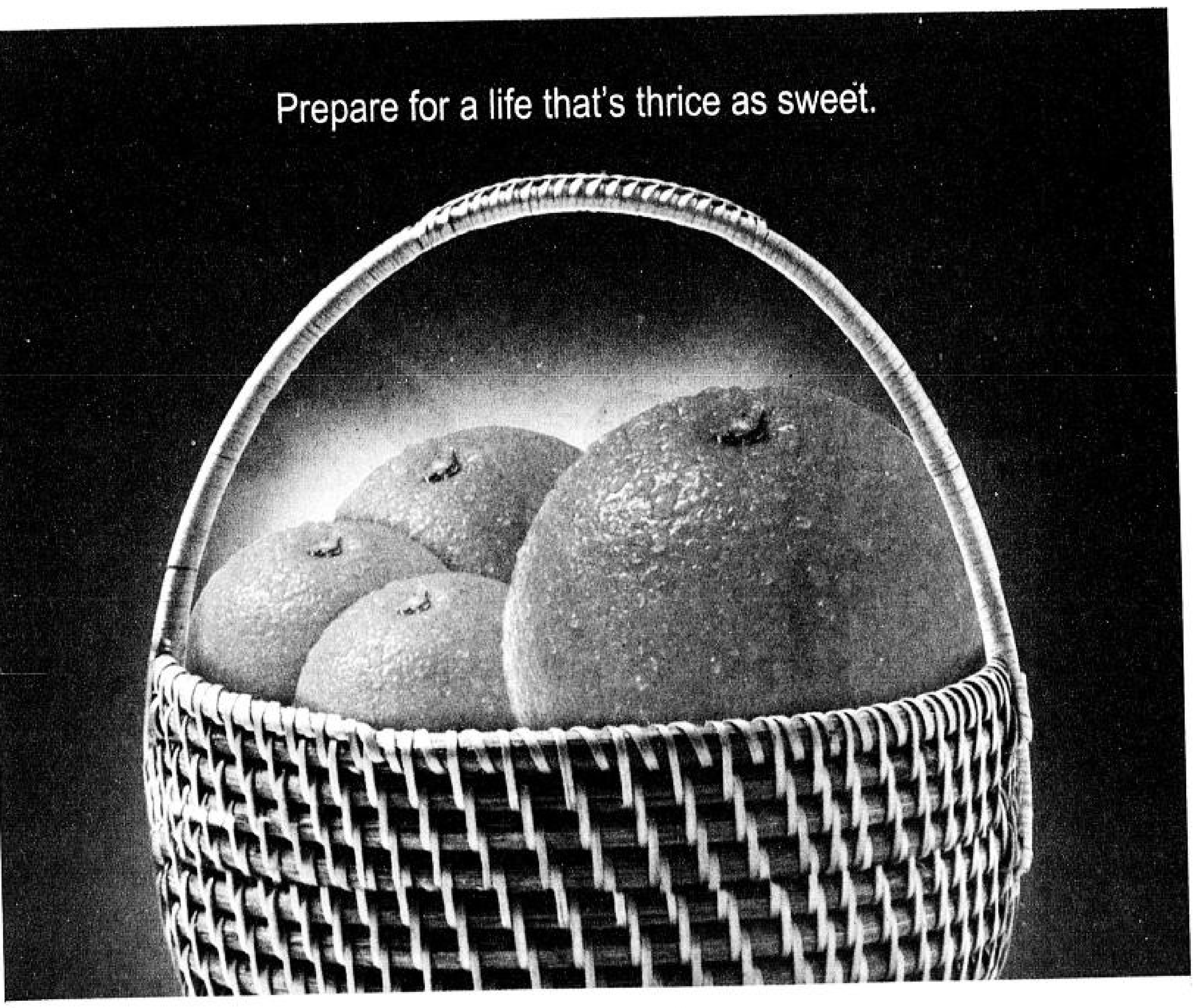
On the other hand, mounting innumerable small paintings on the wall would look cluttered, would cut and subdivide space, further cramping the room. This is what Nuestro means when he speaks of the value of space.

Gfeller started painting in watercolor, acrylic and oil by copying photographs in books and magazines. She trained under leading figurative expressionist Onib Olmedo, and later, in San Francisco, CA, attended classes of portraitist Bob Gerbracht.

Says Nuestro: "For an artist who taught herself to paint the traditional way, and as a mother training her young son to survive, 'learn to float' means something else. It may not directly communicate what is going on but it signals a message about acquiring the basic lessons of life and the dream of continuity—a cycle, endurance, or hope for the future. It is a powerful image that somehow attracts and penetrates, winning your heart and mind."



"UNTITLED," by Erwin Leaño



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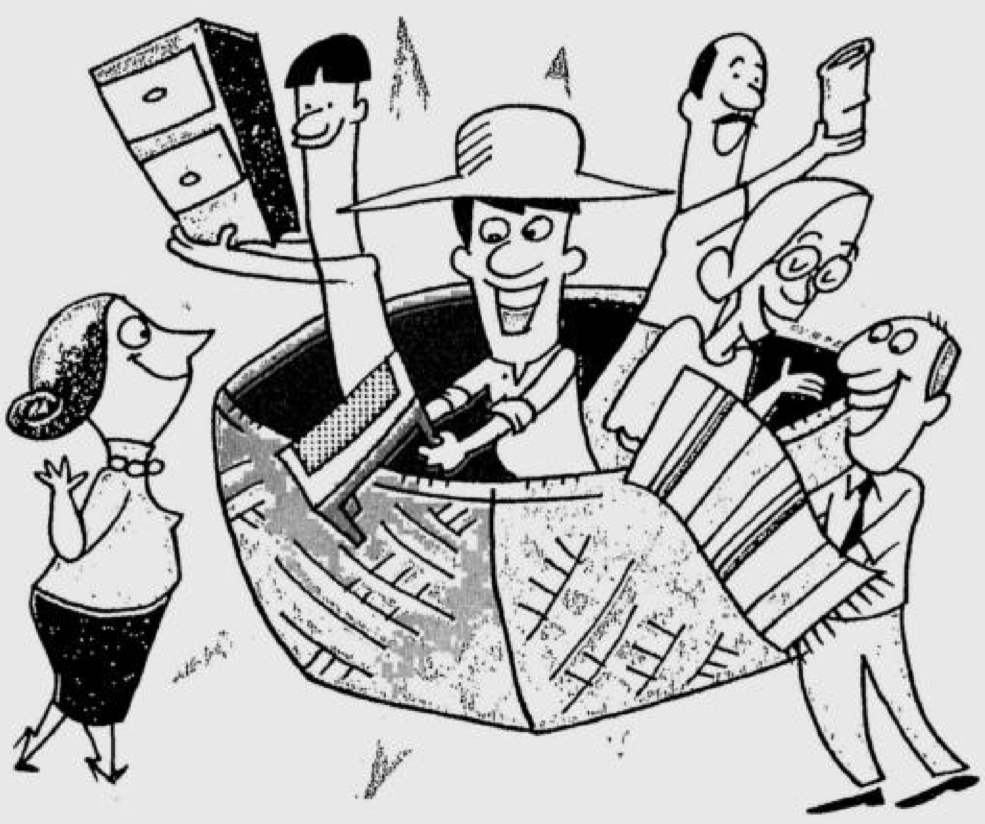

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

Arts-and-crafts shops call for fair trade

By Ed Santoalla
Contributor

A SALA SET OF OLD *MOLAVE* or *kamagong* with matching handmade paper lampshade graces your living room.

On your antique shelf-cum-divider is an assortment of knickknacks, from scented candles on hand-painted wooden holders to small brightly colored, handwoven baskets sitting on finely woven indigenous fabric.

And sitting on a corner: a *bulol* (Igorot rice god) or two amid *pasiking* (the Cordillera rattan-weave backpack) and other tribal baskets of various shapes and sizes.

All of these items brighten your home and make for good conversation during afternoon tea or evening wine with lovers and friends. Have you ever wondered whence these bric-a-brac had come or who made them?

In the stories that you've told about where and when you got these pieces, did it ever occur to you to mention how these products were made and who made them?

Probably not, simply because you may not have that information. The shops from which you got these items from simply sold them to you with nary a mind to instructing you on their provenance and about the people who made them, their lives and their struggles for honor, dignity and the right to earn a living.

The good news is, there are now shops in Metro Manila and key cities where you can buy quality lifestyle items and at the same time learn stories behind such products that will make for much better and more relevant conversation over tea or dinner.

Last Saturday, May 13, on the occasion of World Fair Trade Day, the Philippine Fairtrade Movement inaugurated the Fairtrade Shops, a network of outlets for the products of community artisans and small farmers that also serve as information and education centers for the Fair Trade advocacy in the country.

ARTS/D2

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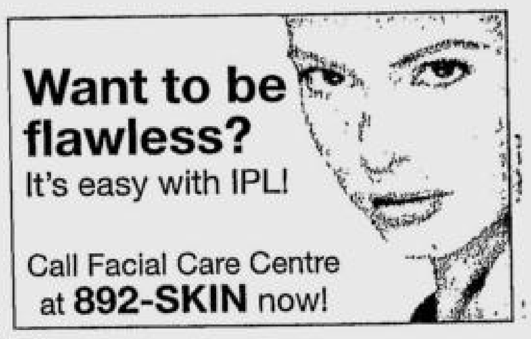

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Take that, Dan Brown

A Filipino Dominican appointed by John Paul II to the Pontifical Biblical Commission points out the errors of the 'Da Vinci Code'

By Christian V. Esguerra

FILIPINO CATHOLICS SEEKING sensible ammunition against the expected assaults on their faith by the film version of "The Da Vinci Code," Dan Brown's potboiler that attacks Christianity, need not rely on foreign literature.

One of their own, the Dominican scholar Fr. Regino Cortes, has come up with a book seeking to debunk whatever's left of the allegations and inaccuracies shoveled back to the mainstream by the former school teacher-turned-millionaire author.

By this time, it won't be inaccurate to consider Brown a badly beaten man, what with the growing library of authoritative books exposing the shallowness, the amateurish deceit of his 2003 novel.

Beaten, of course, only in the realm of scholarship. For the guy still ironically basks in the glory of attacking, though not with much originality, the very foundations of a 2,000-year-old faith while raking in millions of dollars in the process.

By this time, too, Brown ought to realize that it's never wise to wade into the waters of serious scholarship. Especially if one's equipped only with sloppy research that one American book reviewer once inexpicably described as "impeccable."

But that's assuming that there's still a bit of intellectual honesty left in Brown.

Note that in the course of academic debates he has generated, the author appears to have beaten a subtle retreat by maintaining that his work is "fiction." He only wants Christians to more actively discuss their faith, he would rationalize.

It's no secret that the novel, on which the upcoming Hollywood flick was based, was generously lifted from books such as "The Holy Blood, Holy Grail." That, too, achieved celebrity status in the 1980s, only to be exposed later as a sham.

So, is Brown's novel a "fictionalization of another fiction"?

It is within this context that Cortes' "The Da Vinci Code: An Exegetical Review" (University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2005; tel. 7313522 or 4061611 loc. 8252 and 8278) enters the picture.

The first to be written by a Filipino on the furor, it's a slender work of only 131 pages, including bibliography. But it's packed with details exposing weaknesses in the Brown novel.

Cortes, an appointee of John Paul II to the Pontifical Biblical Commission, may have intended his book to be short and sweet to allow an easy grasp of historical and theological information ordinarily difficult to digest even by Christian scholars.

It's common knowledge that in this day and age, a nonfiction work (unless, of course, it floats outrageous propositions like Jesus was a married man or Gloria Arroyo didn't steal votes) can never compete with the popularity of the pop novel.

Educating people swayed by Brown is probably not unlike a secretary running after her perennially busy boss at the elevator. She gotta blurt out everything he needs to know for his next appointment before the door closes.

Brevity, clarity, scholarship

The strength of Cortes's book is its brevity, clarity, scholarship and intellectual sincerity. Add to these the author's solid reputation as a biblical exegete (one who studies and interprets the Holy Scripture).

A professor of Sacred Scriptures at the University of Santo Tomas's Faculty of Sacred Theology, the 64-year-old priest is a product of the prestigious Ecole Biblique et Archeologique Française in Jerusalem, the famous Dominican institution which is the first research institute founded in the Middle East.

Cortes also went to the American University in Cairo to study Arabic and the Institut Dominicain d'Etudes Orientale in the Egyptian capital to learn Islamology.

All in all, Cortes has studied around 15 languages, including Aramaic (the language of Jesus Christ), Syriac, Coptic, Greek and Ugaritic. He's also fluent in French and Latin.

Pitting Cortes' book against Brown's is naturally a no-contest. It's like David and Goliath with no miracle going in favor of the little one. Only millions of dollars in royalties.

But the soft-spoken Cortes cares not to attack the person of Brown, more so issue any moral judgment. It's the compendium of evidence in the book—both historical and theological—that exposes what the novel really is.

"I'm not calling him a liar because that's already a moral judgment," Cortes tells the INQUIRER. "I'm just saying that what he is saying is not true."

Cortes slices through Brown's propositions with surgical precision on three layers: literary, historical and theological.

Impossible

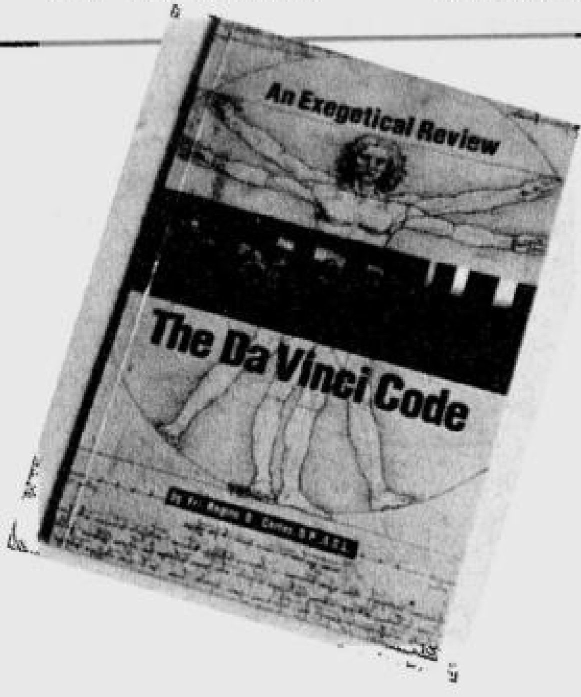
He makes a distinction between "narrative" and "narration" time, which the novel obviously overlooked. Narrative time refers to the length of the story itself while narration time is measured by the length of sentences, paragraphs and chapters.

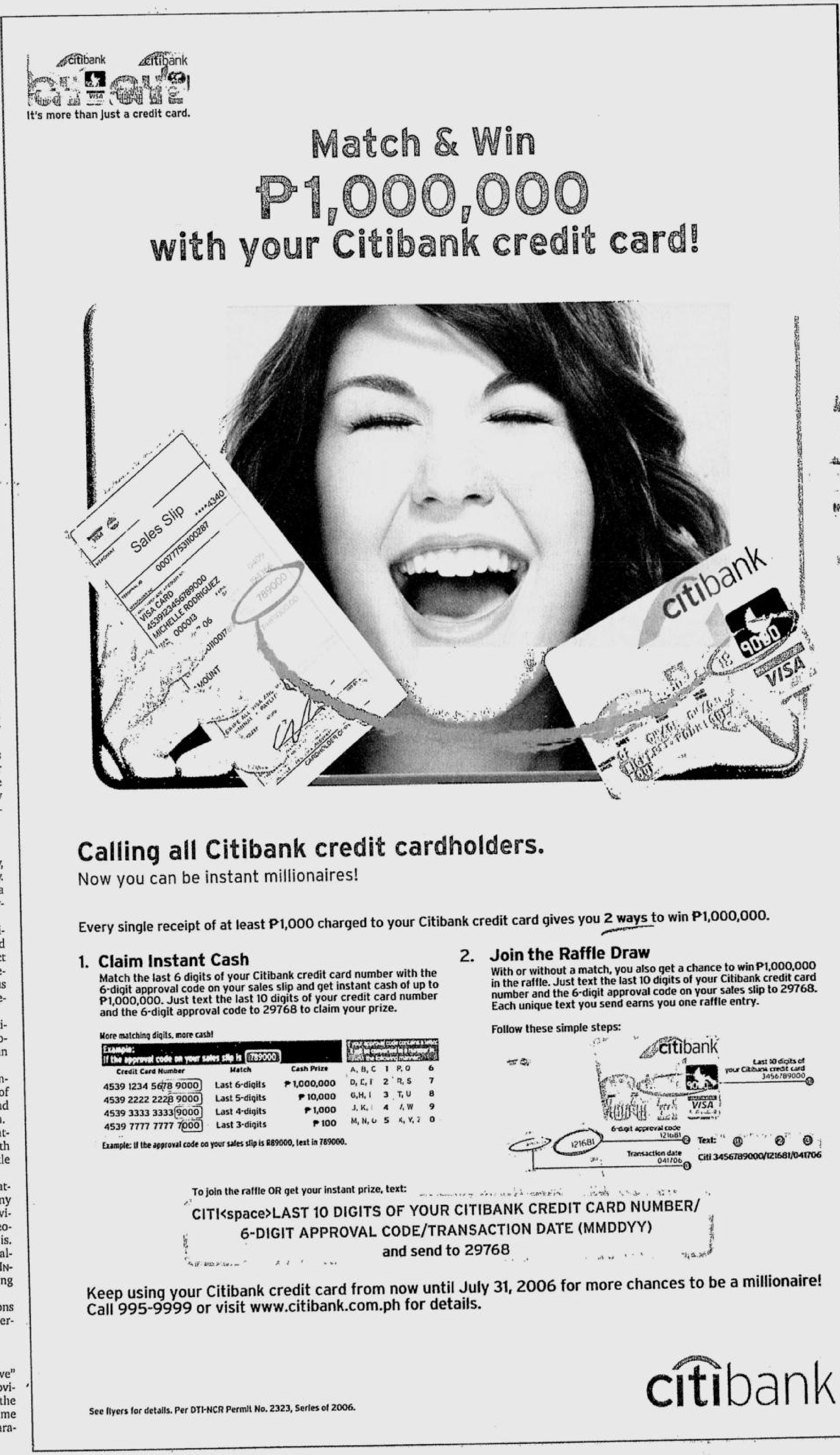
Any thinking individual ought to realize that it's just impossible for main character Robert Langdon and tag teammate Sophie Neveu to complete their adventure in "only less than 12 hours."

We can only hope that Brown won't seek refuge in the principles of fiction to explain this obvious blunder because doing so would only further reveal his stupidity.

And how about his sense of geography? Cortes notes that Brown located 24 Rue Haxo, site of the fictitious Bank of Zurich, on the "western outskirts of Paris" in the novel's orig-

TAKE THAT/ E2





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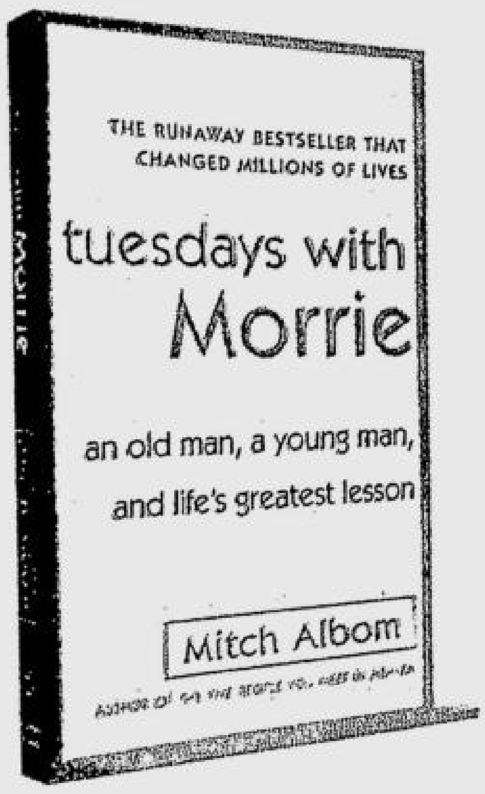
THE RUNAWAY BESTSELLER THAT CHANGED MILLIONS OF LIVES
tuesdays with Morrie
an old man, a young man, and life's greatest lesson
Mitch Albom

GET TO KNOW ENDEARING AND infuriating characters as their lives unfold in this month's PowerBook Club Picks, Lauren Weisberger's "The Devil Wears Prada" and Mitch Albom's "Tuesdays with Morrie."

In "The Devil Wears Prada," Lauren Weisberger introduces readers to Andrea Sachs, a small-town girl fresh out of college, who lands the job "a million girls would die for." Hired as the assistant to Miranda Priestly, a high-profile, fabulously successful editor, Andrea narrates her experiences with the boss from hell.

From sending the latest, not-yet-in-stores Harry Potter to Miranda's children in Paris by private jet, to locating an unnamed antique store where Miranda had at some point admired a vintage dresser, to serving lattes to Miranda at precisely the piping-hot temperature she prefers, Andrea is sorely tested each and every day—and often late into the night with orders barked over the phone.

She puts up with it all by keeping her eyes on the prize: a recommendation from Miranda that will get Andrea a top job at any magazine of her choosing. As things escalate from the merely unacceptable to the downright outrageous, however, Andrea begins to realize that the job a million girls would die for may just kill her. And even if she survives, she has to decide whether or not the job is worth the price of her soul.

Enjoy a thorough discussion of Andrea's experiences in "The Devil Wears Prada" on May 30, 6:30 p.m., in PowerBooks Greenbelt.

Get to know more about author Mitch Albom as he shares the heartwarming story of his relationship with his college mentor Morrie Schwartz in "Tuesdays with Morrie." Upon seeing him on the "Nightline" program talking about what it was like to die from Lou Gehrig's disease, Albom is both horrified and ashamed. He flies to Boston for a reunion with his old teacher, whom he hadn't seen or talked to in 16 years. Then began a series of weekly Tuesday visits, rekindling their loving teacher-student relationship while tackling a larger subject in their final "class": the meaning of life.

Talk about "Tuesdays with Morrie" over a hot cup of coffee from The Java Man on May 31, 6:30 p.m., in PowerBoooks Megamall.

The PowerBook Club is open to everyone. Simply register at the customer service counter of any PowerBooks branch and get 10 percent off the featured book. Special treat for Powercard Plus holders: sign up and get 20 percent off the featured book. Plus; the first 16 registrants to arrive will get a free cup of coffee from The Java Man.

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the devil wears prada

Take that, Dan Brown

From page E1

inal English version. It's in the east, says the priest, who's familiar with the place.

"This error is so glaring that in the French translation of the novel, it was changed to 24 Rue de Longchamp," Cortes writes.

While Brown can be forgiven for relatively minor mistakes like that, what scholars find most revolting are the historical and theological errors he has unleashed and the dangers they might bring to the faith.

Cortes does his part of the defense by sticking to the facts and never lecturing on spirituality, faith and morality. The pieces of evidence are enough.

Consider the issue of the divinity of Jesus Christ.

In the novel, Brown (obviously lecturing through his character Langdon) claims that it was merely a human declaration during the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD.

He's essentially denying witnesses' accounts of the life, death and resurrection of Christ which Christians have come to know and believe through the apostles.

"Our main witnesses to our Catholic faith are the apostles, especially St. Peter and St. Paul. The two have contrasting personalities but they [both] testified to the divinity of Christ," Cortes writes.

He notes that Peter, considered the first pope, followed Christ until His "ascension," while Paul wrote that "if Christ did not resurrect from the dead, our faith would be useless."

Conspiracy

How about Brown's resurrection of the old claim in the realm of conspiracy theories that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene?

Cortes' book says there's just no evidence on this even if the novelist insists that it's a "fact" hidden from the faithful since the start of Christianity. If that's the case, the Vatican is such a great liar that it has protected a devastating lie for over 2,000 years, the Dominican says.

"Even though it is said that rabbis are supposed to be married (during the time of Jesus), Jesus was not an official rabbi and so did not have to follow the 'social decorum' of His time," Cortes explains.

A most engaging aspect of "The Da Vinci Code" is the alleged existence of clues in Leonardo's "Mona Lisa," "Madonna of the Rocks," and "The Last Supper"—all pertaining to secrets involving Christ and Mary Magdalene.

Why, for instance, does John the Evangelist look like a woman in "The Last Supper" and whose sitting position beside Jesus forms an "M"? Why does Peter stare menacingly at John with a dagger pointed in his direction? And where's the cup? In Brown's mind, these are all clues about Mary Magdalene.

Cortes points out that the painting depicts the moment when Jesus revealed that one of the apostles would betray Him. He says Leonardo depicted Peter, somehow known for his temper, in the act of leaning toward John, the favorite of Jesus and presumably his confidante, and asking him who the traitor was.

As far as Mary Magdalene is concerned, Cortes explains that not much is known about her whereabouts in the later stages of her life. The most is preserved by believers in St. Maximin La-Sainte-Baume in France where she was said to have kept a hermetic life until death.

There's a grotto serving as a center of pilgrimage in the area which has been maintained by the Dominicans for the last 700 years, Cortes says.

Many more answers are contained in Cortes' book. But they can never guarantee to keep the faithful invincible in the face of Brown's assaults.

Much of the battle will still be decided by faith. To rest it in the hands of a belief system that has survived more than two millennia or to one enterprising author seeking to demolish the faith is still for the thinking reader to decide.

Southridge to open writing center

PAREF SOUTHRIDGE will soon launch the country's first creative writing center for elementary and high-school students.

Emmanuel Rentoy, teacher of the Creative Writing elective class in Southridge and founder of the center, believes that students need not wait until college to be trained how to write.

"The earlier a student learns to write creatively, the more advantageous it is for him, as well as for the school," he said.

The Center will hold the first-ever national writers workshop for high-school students.

The Southridge Creative Writing Center will also establish links with the country's top literary centers like UP Likhaan and UST Center for Creative Writing and Studies.

Rentoy, who is working on his thesis for his MA in Creative Writing in UST, said the center will function as training ground for the best writers in Southridge by providing and organizing lectures, workshops, and literary performances.

Staff of the Southridge Creative Writing Center will include Emmanuel Rentoy, a fellow of the 6th UST National Writers Workshop and moderator of the Catholic Mass Media award-winning school paper, The Ridge, and Joseph de Luna Saguid, winner of Maningning Miclat Poetry Award and Gantimpalang Collantes.

E-mail southridge@southridge.com.ph or call 8420506 loc. 146.

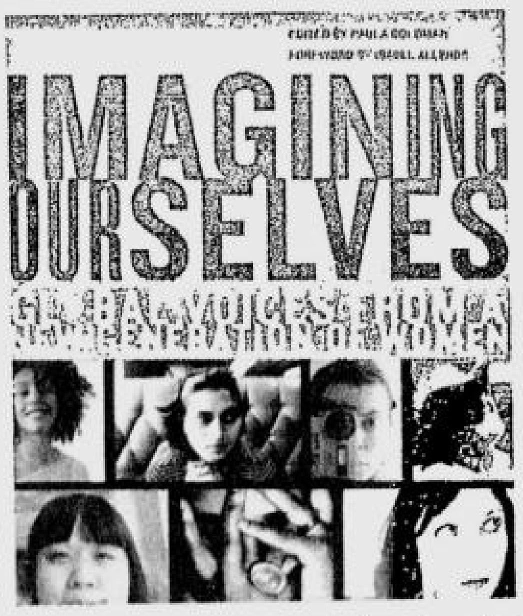
Women of the new generation speak out in new book

WHAT DEFINES YOUR GENERATION of women? A few years ago, a PhD candidate at Harvard named Paula Goldman e-mailed this question to women aged 20-40 around the globe.

Goldman was curious to know how this new generation of adult women differed from those who had come before them. The thousands of replies she got resulted in "Imagining Ourselves: Global Voices from a New Generation of Women," a book that captures and catalyzes the ethos of the new generation of women around the world.

The book was officially launched to coincide with International Women's Day, held last March 8, while accompanied by a major global campaign aimed at empowering the next generation of women. The event included an online exhibit and a series of international events and gatherings.

Here in the country, PowerBooks Specialty Store has secured the honor of bringing this major work to Filipino readers. "Imagining Ourselves: Global Voices from a New Generation of Women" will be launched on May 31, 7 p.m., at PowerBooks Greenbelt.



With a foreword by popular author Isabel Allende, the challenging, funny, and thought-provoking book includes 105 entries, representing 57 countries and virtually every populated region of the globe. Notable participants include Queen Rania of Jordan, singer/songwriter Ani DiFranco, novelist Zadie Smith and many more.

In contributions that include photographs, songs, poems, paintings, collages and prose, young women discuss their lives, sharing the differences between their worlds and their mothers' worlds. These brave women boldly address the challenges they and their cultures face, wielding their power to create positive social change.

Gaining a reach far greater than what Goldman had dreamed, "Imagining Ourselves" sets out to build bridges and to demonstrate the power of each individual life, and the collective power of today's generation of women as a whole.

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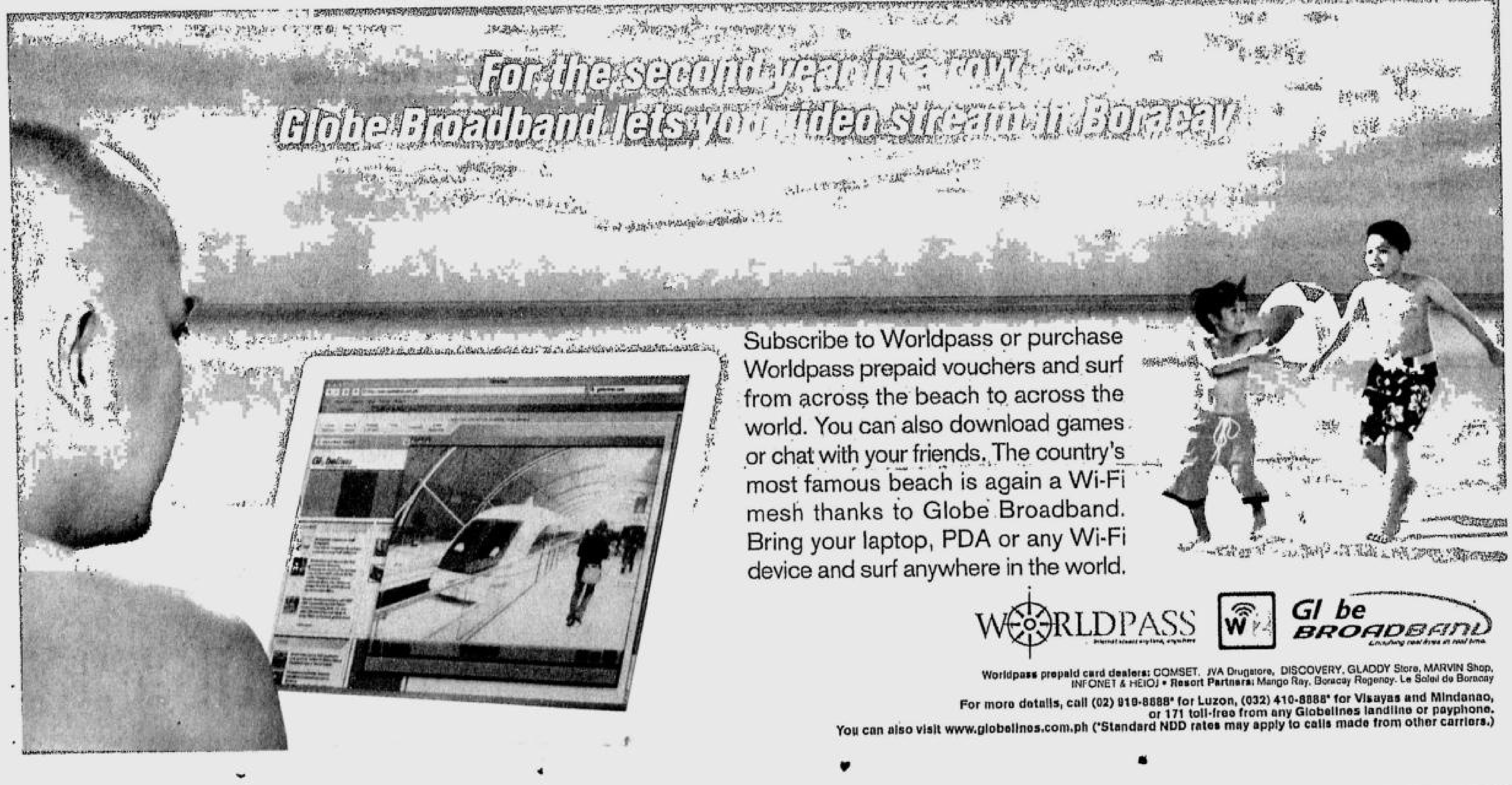
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iPod prizes from NBS-McGraw Hill

CARLO Alison Sobingsobing receives an iPod Shuffle

NATIONAL BOOK STORE, THE country's national bookstore and leading textbook publisher McGraw Hill Professional, recently concluded the McGraw Hill Win-an-iPod Raffle Contest, which ran Dec. 5, 2005-Feb. 15, with the announcement of its five lucky winners.

The contest was open to all customers who purchased P500 worth of selected McGraw-Hill books at the Shangri-La, Glorietta, SM Megamall, Podium Bestseller, Cybermall Eastwood, Filinvest, Robinson's Place Ermita and Ayala Center Cebu National Book Store branches during the promo period.

Maria Victoria O. Bulaong was awarded an iPod Video for winning the grand prize, second placer Mariano O. Parcon Jr. took home an iPod Nano while third prize winners Pablo F. Antonio, Lovely Clare O. Buela and Carlo Alison Sobingsobing received an iPod Shuffle each.

Prizes were handed out by National Bookstore's marketing officer for Books, Cai Gualberto, and Book Category Analysts Louella Tumaneng and Antoinette Cardona.

Show-biz wedding exclusive

DID YOU KNOW THAT the blinding pair of three-cluster earrings Claudine Barretto wore to her wedding had a total of 17 carats? Did you know that apart from the platinum band wedding ring from Tiffany&Co., the bride didn't remove her 5.03 karat engagement ring all throughout the ceremony and reception?

These and more little known trivia and private moments never seen on TV fill the June issue of StarStudio Magazine, the entertainment glossy of ABS-CBN Publishing.

The issue features a 36-page special on the Barretto-Raymart Santiago nuptials last March in Tagaytay Highlands. Over 180 never-before-seen photos capture the entire event.

Also in the issue are the travel photos of Sam Milby and Say Alonzo, the love story of Dingdong Dantes and Karylle, "Pinoy Big Brother's" first grand winner Nene Tamayo's prized home in Binangonan, Rizal, and the special 14th anniversary pictorial of starmaker Johnny Manahan with the Star Magic jewels Claudine, Kristine Hermosa, Bea Alonzo, Angelica Panganiban, Shaina Magdayao and Maja Salvador.

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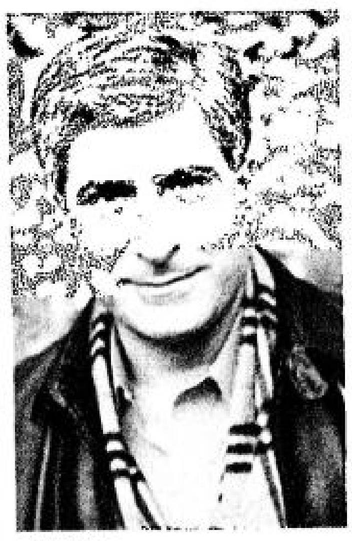
Spotlight on author Steve Berry

BEST-SELLING AUTHOR STEVE Berry is in the spotlight this May at PowerBooks. He lives on the Georgia coast in Camden County. He's been a practicing lawyer for 25 years and has helped people both in and out of the courtroom. He's also active in local politics, having served on the Camden County Board of Education and, currently, is one of five members of the Camden County Board of Commissioners.


STEVE Berry

Steve has been writing since 1990. In 2000 and 2001 he won the Georgia State Bar fiction writing contest and his two short stories appeared in the Georgia State Bar Journal. He also tried his hand at novel contests. An early version of his first published novel, T"he Amber Room," placed third at the 1998 Florida First Coast Writers Festival.

Though his undergraduate degree was in political science and he was trained as a lawyer, it was Steve's interest in history that led to his writing international suspense thrillers. He also credits the nuns who taught him in elementary school with instilling the discipline needed to craft a novel and then sell it to a publisher.

It took Steve 12 years, 85 rejections and over five different manuscripts before Ballantine Books finally bought a manuscript.

Steve's first two books, "The Amber Room" and "The Romanov Prophecy," were both national bestsellers. His next novel, "The Third Secret," became an instant bestseller, debuting at No. 13 on The New York Times hardcover list and climbing to No. 5 on the paperback list. The book also appeared in the Top 10 bestseller lists of USA Today, Publisher's Weekly and Booksense.

His latest hardcover is "The Templar Legacy," which debuted at No. 4 on The New York Times bestseller list. Rights to all four novels have been sold worldwide, currently in 34 countries. Steve was selected in 2005 by the Georgia Writer's Association as its Author of the Year.

Steve travels a great deal and has spent time in the Caribbean, Mexico, Europe and Russia. Recently, Ballantine Books renewed Steve's contract for three more thrillers, to be published in 2007, 2008 and 2009.

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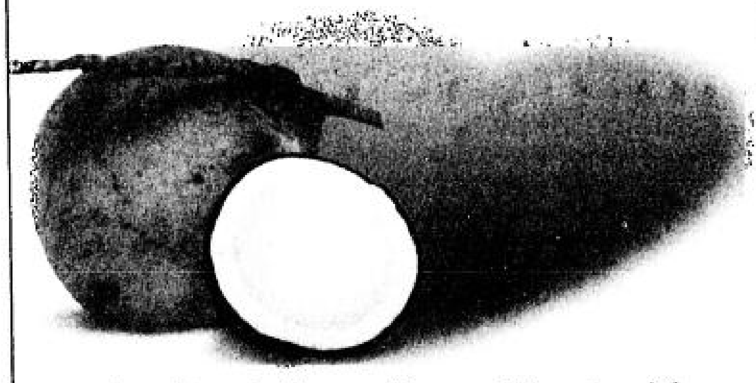

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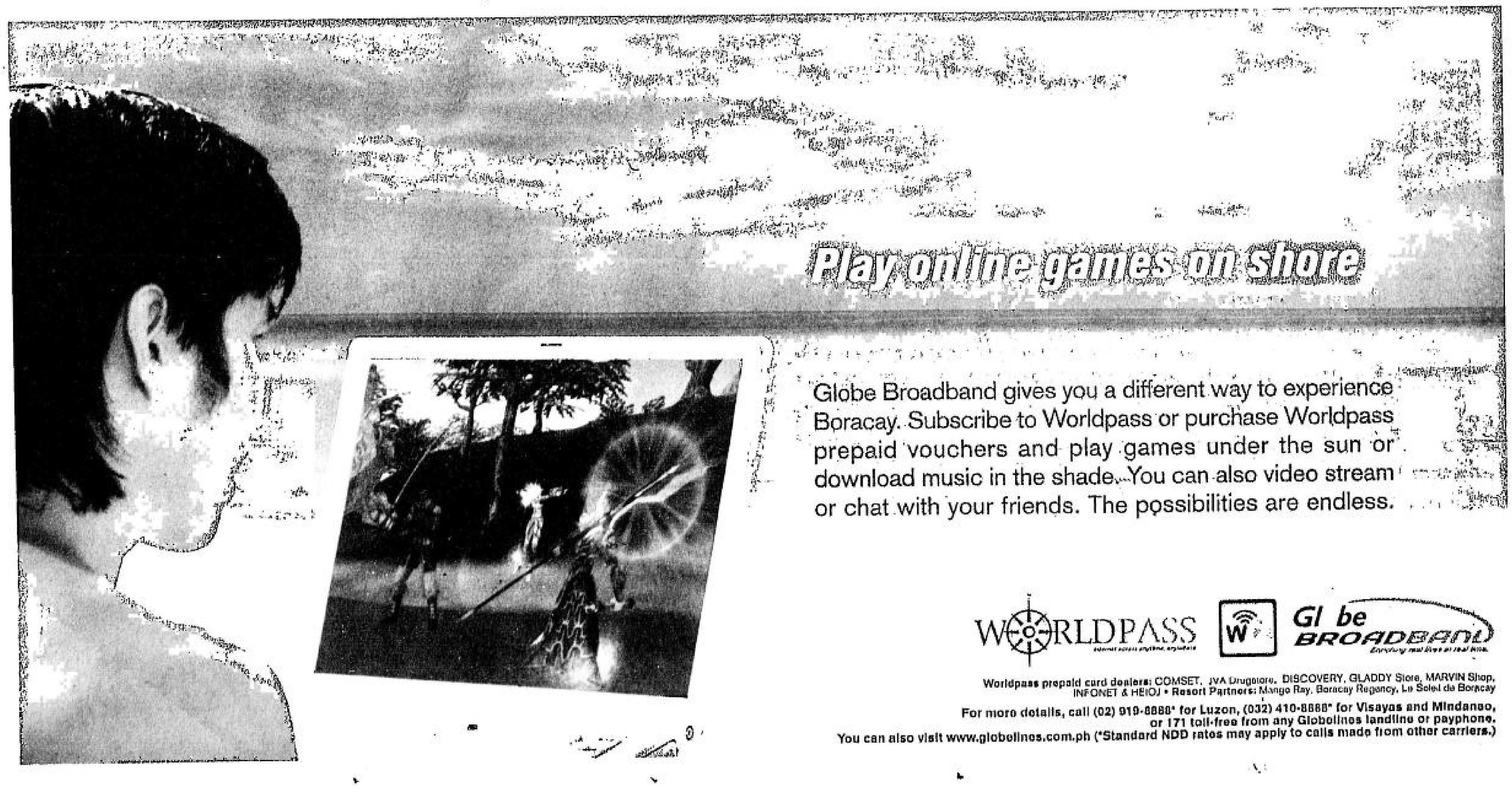

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May	21	SM City San Lazaro
May	26	SM City Pampanga
May	27	SM Supercenter Molino
May	31	SM City Baguio

BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

May	27 & 28	SM City Sucat

TAEKWONDO

May	16 & 17	SM City Manila
May	20 & 21	SM City Bicutan
May	23 & 24	SM City Bacoor
May	27 & 28	SM City Batangas
May	30 & 31	SM City Sta. Rosa

WUSHU

May	16 & 17	SM Southmall
May	20 & 21	SM City Dasmariñas
May	27 & 28	SM City Fairview
May	30 & 31	SM City San Lazaro

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May	15 & 16	SM City Bacoor
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May	19 & 20	SM Southmall
May	23 & 24	SM City Dasmariñas

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May	15-18, 22-25 & 29-31	SM City Cebu
May	16,18, 23, 25 & 30	SM City Fairview
May	16,18, 23, 25 & 31	SM Southmall
May	15, 16, 18, 23, 29 & 30	SM City North Edsa
May	15, 17, 22, 24, 29 & 31	SM City Bicutan
May	16,18, 23, 25 & 30	SM City Sta. Rosa

SPORTS DEMONSTRATION & COMPETITION

XMA	May	19 - 21	SM City Batangas
CAPOEIRA	May	19 - 21	SM Megamall
SPORTS CENTRAL SUMMER SPORTS	May	26 - 28	SM City Dasmariñas
TAEKWONDO	June	02 - 04	SM City Fairview

TOBY'S MAD RANGE SHOOTOUT 3

May	20	SM City North Edsa
June	17	SM City Fairview
July	15	SM City San Lazaro
August	19	SM Megamall

OTHER ACTIVITIES

May 15	TAEKWONDO by ILOILO CITY SPORTS	SM City Iloilo
May 15 - 31	1st GOVERNOR'S CUP KIDDIES BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT	SM City Sta. Rosa
May 16	PBA CLINIC	SM City Sta. Rosa
May 20	SHOW 'EM UP - AN AUTO SHOW	SM City Batangas
May 21	CAVALIER'S CHESS CLUB - RINCON CHAPTER	SM Supercenter Valenzuela
May 27&28	MOTORCYCLE & SCOOTER SHOW	SM City Marilao
May 28	CHESS TOURNAMENT	SM City Lucena
May 29	DASMARIÑAS TAEKWONDO FRIENDSHIP GAME	SM City Dasmariñas
June 1 - 4	7th NATIONWIDE PENCAK SILAT OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP	SM City Iloilo

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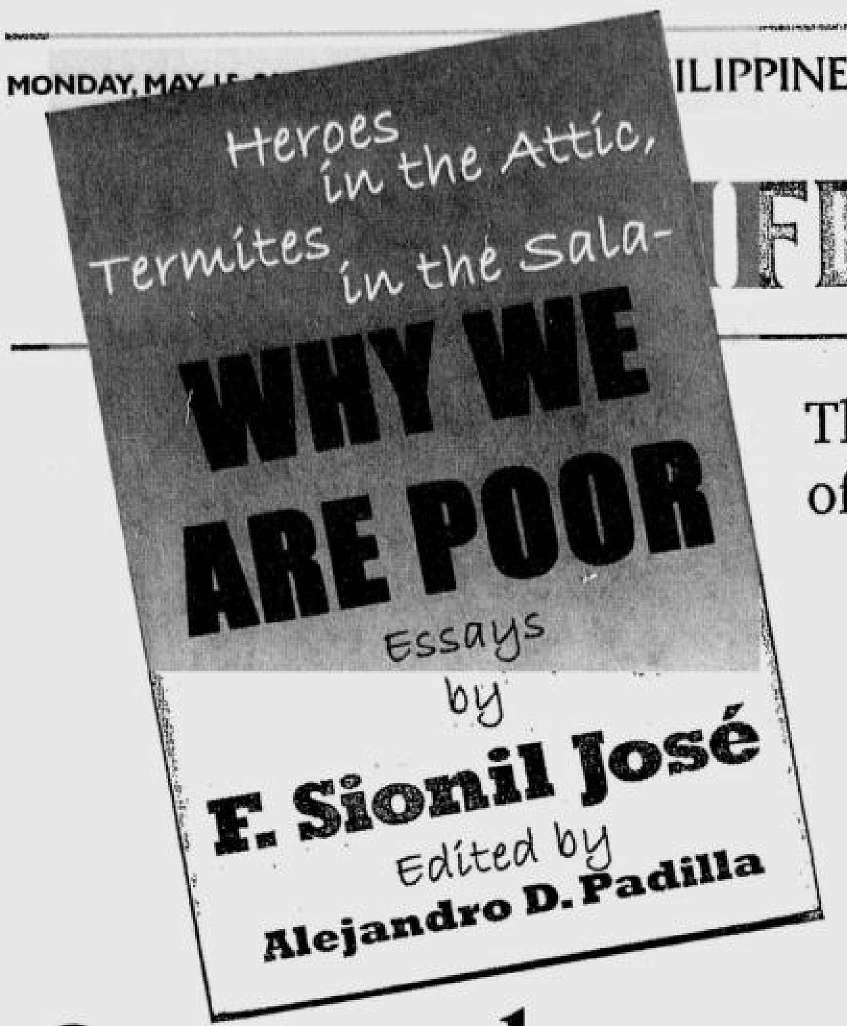

The National Artist for Literature comes out with a collection of trenchant essays dissecting the Filipino malaise

Outspoken essays from a blunt pen

By José Victor Z. Torres
Contributor

IN "HEROES IN THE ATTIC, TERMITES IN THE Sala: Why We Are Poor: Essays by F. Sionil José" (Solidaridad Publishing House, 2005, 349 pages; available at Solidaridad Bookshop in Ermita, Manila, and major bookstores nationwide), editor Alejandro Padilla describes the new book of essays by the National Artist for Literature as tackling "a variety of subjects ranging from national problems… to national concerns… and timely issues." There are also topics such as food, literary creations and craftsmanship, and architecture, "not to mention his travel accounts and reminiscences."

There are seven sections in the book, each dealing with different topics: "Time, Memory and Nostalgia"; "The Chinese Connection (China and Chinese-Filipinos)"; "Homage and Homilies" (personalities); "Some Prickly Issues" (culture and society); "Musings: Literary, Philosophical, Political, or Otherwise" (food and writing); "Matters of Consequence" (education, tourism, and Mindanao); and "An Elusive Filipino Dream" (world prospects for the Philippines).

These writings are products of José's blunt pen that call attention to the merits and faults of the Filipinos in facing issues, concerns, or just plain happenings in their everyday lives.

The book is an eye-opener. The writer shares insights that are painful realities for our culture which is non-confrontational in dealing with criticism.

José's essays are not just musings but hard observations. Some of the essays may be dated (like the comments on the Estrada administration), but they still call attention to the mistakes we did in the past.

But do we learn from our mistakes?

The book's title says it all.

Slew of detractors

José's candid opinions have, of course, earned him a slew of detractors from the gay movement, the Tsinoys, 'and political as well as literary figures.

In one essay, José didn't mince words so that the editors of a national daily found it too "controversial" and so pulled it out of publication.

Being a victim of censorship of the martial law years, the event did not sit well with José, who stopped writing for the daily and simply published his censored piece in a rival newspaper. (The writer and the daily have since then patched up their differences.)

José urges Filipinos to be vigilant. He points out that Filipinos take things for granted and admire the wrong people. He mentions this false admiration in his foreword:

"Indeed, we have willfully relegated our sterling heroes in the attic where they are conveniently forgotten—the role models that could easily redeem us. And as for the nonentities, the phony nationalists, the crass poseurs who preen on our TV screens, and who are anointed with honors, we show them off like the heirlooms that adorn our living rooms, not realizing they are actually termites that will eventually bring the house down."

But these are more than biting commentaries. There are personal notes and anecdotes on people José had known, places he had visited, and events he had witnessed.

The sketch of the late National Artist for Literature Nick Joaquin shows not only the late hard-drinking genius, but also the man who disdained much-deserved honors and the writer who valued friends and companionship.

We have known the late Foreign Secretary Raul Manglapus as an "Amboy" before and during the

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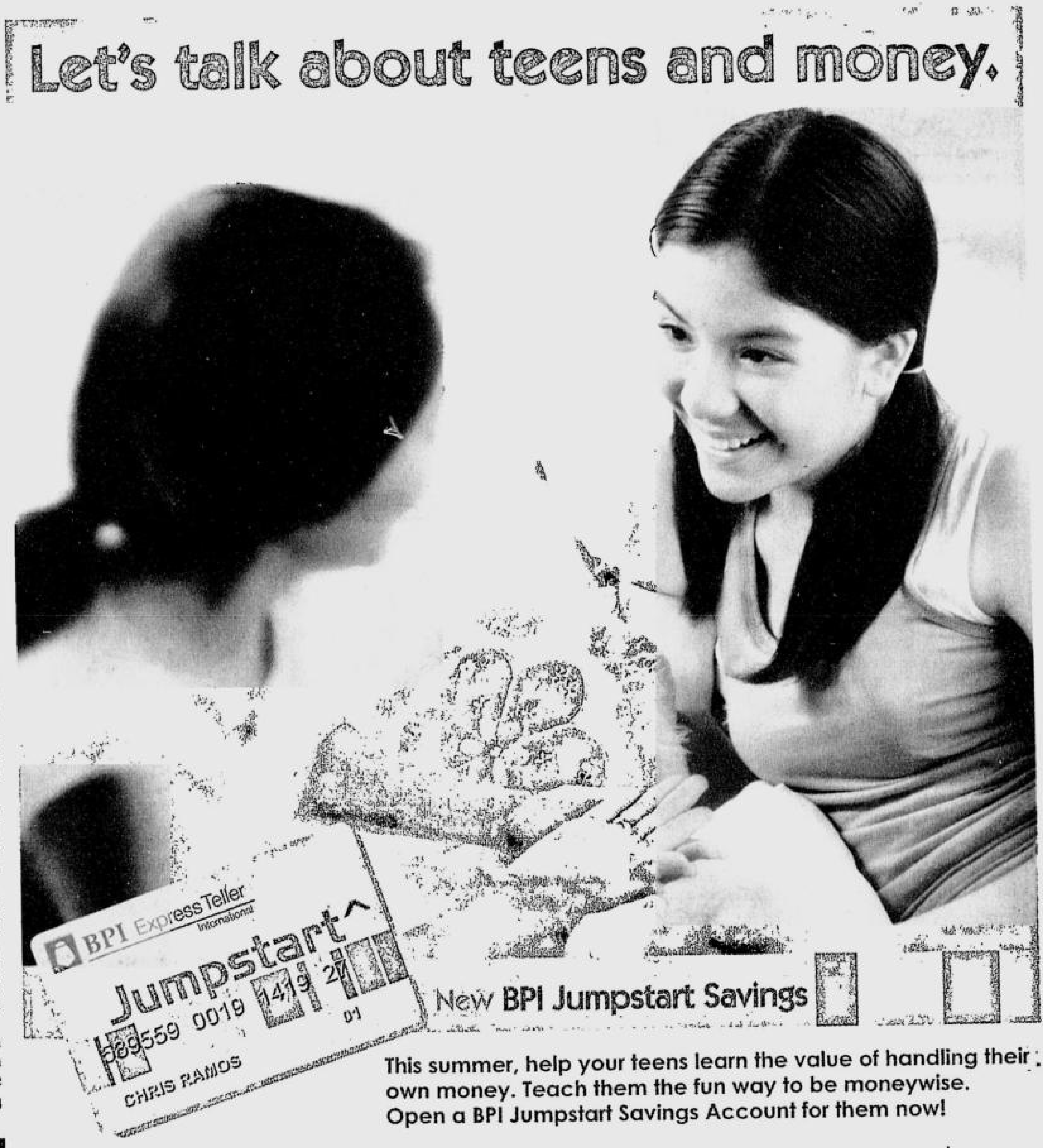

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Unique writeshop on children's literature

By Winton Lou G. Ynion
Contributor

THE FAR EASTERN UNIVERSITY (FEU) held its First Tamaraw National Writeshop on Children's Literature April 5-11 in Baguio City.

Having observed many local and national workshops in the country, FEU Institute of Arts and Sciences Dean Jaime An Lim introduced some innovations in the focus and format of the writeshop.

First, the writeshop concentrated on one emerging genre only—children's literature—in the belief that the love of reading must be developed early and that a wealth of appropriate materials must be produced to address the need.

Second, the writeshop required the writing fellows not only to critique each other's work but also to come up with new pieces using the Cordilleras as cultural background. The resulting works will be illustrated and compiled under the working title of "Bul-ol: The Tamaraw Anthology of Stories for Children," to be edited by Winton Lou Ynion and published by the FEU Publications.

Twelve writing fellowships were available to college students in open competition nationwide. The fellows for English were Martha Rose Cabrera, Romnick Corpus, Fairlane Inso, Khadija Salisa, Jonathan Siason, and Jay Malvin Tia. The fellows for Filipino were Mark Lester de la Cruz, Justin Mark Cinco, Hari Martin Lualhati, Maynard Manansala, Osmar Miranda and Bernadette Neri.

The mentoring panelists were Heidi Eusebio-Abad, Lalaine Yanila-Aquino, Eugene Evasco and Luis Gatmaitan.

Each delivered a plenary lecture on the state, opportunities and concerns in the field of children's stories in the Philippines.

Abad discussed her experience in writing about the cultural icons of the Cordilleras.

Aquino demonstrated the technique of evaluating stories in a constructivist mode.

Evasco presented a historical survey of the development of children's stories in the country.

And Gatmaitan, an FEU alumnus and a Palanca Hall of Famer, gathered some of his stories and discussed his aesthetics.

Fully supported by the FEU under president Lydia B. Echauz and board of trustees chair Lourdes R. Montinola, the one-week writeshop involved lectures and critiquing sessions, small group discussions, literary readings, research, and one-on-one mentoring consultations.

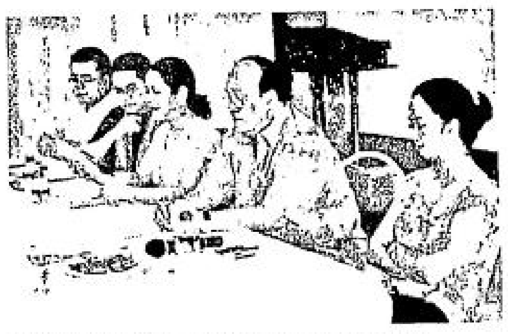
Some children's books and scholarly handouts on theories of fiction for children were also distributed in the hope of providing the fellows the necessary practical and theoretical background.

"This is only the first. It won't be the last," Dean An Lim said of his brainchild after the opening program's ethnic ceremonial dance of thanksgiving held at the University of the Cordilleras Theater.

The gods might yet conspire to grant his wish.

WRITERS in Camp John Hay. The First Tamaraw National Writeshop for Children's Literature panelists, fellows and staff: (first row, from left) writeshop director Winton Lou Ynion, Hari Martin Lualhati, Martha Rose Cabrera, Osmar Miranda, Maynard Manansala, Jonathan Siason, Fairlane Inso, Bernadette Neri, Khadija Salisa, and staff member Jet Batin; (second row) secretariat Reggy Figer, Jay Malvin Tia, Justin Mark Cinco, panelist Lalaine Yanila-Aquino, panelist Luis Gatmaitan, founder Dean Jaime An Lim, panelist Eugene Evasco, panelist Heidi Eusebio-Abad, Romnick Corpus, Mark Lester de la Cruz and coordinator Lourdes Concepcion

LUIS Gatmaitan, FEU alumnus and Palanca Hall of Famer, delivers the plenary lecture.


CRITIQUING panelists are (from left) Eugene Evasco, Luis Gatmaitan, Heidi Eusebio-Abad, Writeshop founder Jaime An Lim, and Lalaine Yanila-Aquino.

ESTABLISHED and aspiring writers pose for posterity.

'New' national writers workshop raises the bar

By Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo
Contributor

"IT WAS REALLY GREAT! CAN WE BE fellows again in the next UP workshop?" This was the comment from all the writing fellows as the 45th UP National Writers' Workshop came to an end on April 8 at the Pines View Hotel in Baguio City.

The reply came from National Artist Virgilio Almario: "Whoever completes the work-in-progress presented here within the year will get an invitation to the next workshop."

The exchange captured the difference between this workshop and those that came before it. Designed by Likhaan: The UP Institute of Creative Writing to address the needs of practitioners rather than beginners, the workshop required fellows to present a work-in-progress and discuss problems related to the work and their personal poetics, in addition to the usual finished original work to be critiqued.

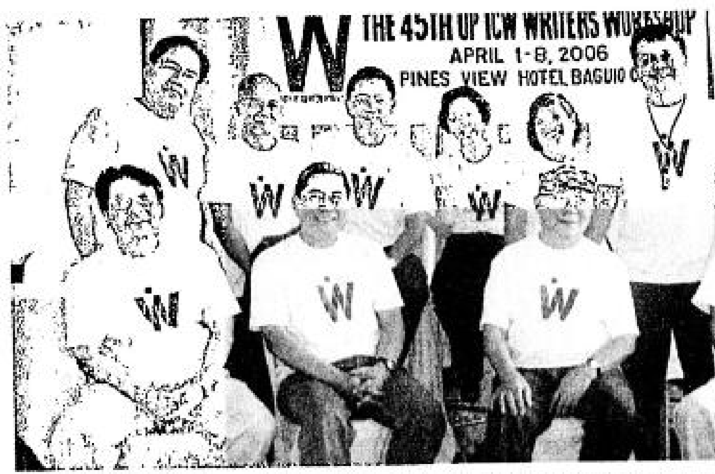
Likhaan's 45th writer's workshop was sponsored by UP Diliman chancellor Sergio S. Cao. In recognition of its importance, not just for the university but for the country's literary community, all Diliman chancellors, from Roger Posadas onward, have sponsored the activity. This year, additional funding was sought from the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. The NCCA'S Committee on the Literary Arts, under the leadership of Lito Zulueta, is working for the institutionalizing of support for both national and regional writing workshops. The Likhaan Workshop, with its new format, is being considered as a possible model.

One of the things which distinguishes the Likhaan Workshop from other national writing workshops is its teaching panel, which is composed of the institute's own associates, advisers and national fellows, all of them members of the UP faculty, and much-awarded writers. This year, I was appointed by ICW director Vim Nadera to direct the workshop since I had a hand in conceptualizing it. Others members of the distinguished panel were Vim himself of course, National Artist Rio Alma, Ramon Magsaysay awardee Bien Lumbera, university professor Jimmy Abad, UP Mindanao chancellor Ricky de Ungria, Carlos Palanca Hall of Fame awardees Butch Dalisay and Rene Villanueva, Joi Barrios, Lilia Quindoza Santiago, Jun Cruz Reyes, and Charlson Ong. (Not present this time for various reasons were Amelia Lapeña-Bonifacio, Neil Garcia, Carla Pacis and Marra Lanot.)

Another quality is its varying formats. Earlier workshops were multilingual, included experimental genres, and featured both parallel and plenary sessions, and public lectures by selected panelists.

THE FELLOWS take a break: (clockwise from left front) Bernice Roldan, Allan Lopez, Paolo Manalo, Joel Toledo, Imo Quibilan, Lourd de Veyra, Emong de Borja

JOEL Toledo (poetry), Imo Quibilan (kuwento), Liza Magtoto (drama), Allan Lopez (drama)



THE TEACHING panel: (front) Charlson Ong, National Artist Virgilio S. Almario, Bienvenido Lumbera, Gemino H. Abad; (back) Jose Y. Dalisay Jr., Rene O. Villanueva, UP Mindanao Chancellor Ricardo de Ungria, UP VP for Public Affairs Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo, Lilia Quindoza-Santiago, UP ICW director Vim Nadera, Jun Cruz Reyes

Downsized

Downsized now to one week and 12 fellowships (from two weeks and 20 fellowships), the workshop is necessarily more competitive. It is open, not just to former UP fellows (like Kumustahan, the writers' seminar held by Likhaan in Tagaytay in 2003), but to all writers in English or Filipino who meet the requirements. For the first time, creative nonfiction was included among the categories; and the workshop contained an additional outreach module, a seminar for teachers on the writing and teaching of creative writing, held in collaboration with UP Baguio. The seminar was coordinated by Lilia.

UP chancellor Precy Macansantos came to the welcome dinner at the hotel dining room with her husband, poet Butch Macansantos, and their daughter, Monica, a writer herself. She expressed surprise when she noted that some of the fellows seemed closer to her age than her daughter's.

We explained that this new workshop hopes to touch base with writers who may no longer have access to the peer support and peer review which they enjoyed while they were in academe, or who may never have had that kind of access. We hope it will also encourage them to reflect on their work, who it's for, where it's headed, what they think its importance is for other Filipinos and for the country. So discussions don't focus too much on the individual work submitted but on larger issues which the work raises, although of course craft is not neglected.

According to Vim, some beginning writers are unhappy about this raising of the bar. But as he says, "It's necessary. Likhaan's mandate is to play a leadership role in the development of Philippine literature."

Thus the panel considered the presentation by the fellows more important than the individual workshops. Lourd de Veyra (lead singer of rock band Radioactive Sago Project) presented a stirring manifesto for his alternative poetry. Paolo Manalo (controversial award-winning author of "Jolography") presented a complex paradoxical framework for his interest in popular culture and his linguistic experiments.

Playwright Allan Lopez raised some eyebrows with his Pinoy version of theater of cruelty. Raymond de Borja's attempts to marry the precision of science with the elegance of art elicited praise, as did Joel Toledo's exquisitely fashioned quiet poetry.

Mario Miclat's impassioned narrative of the painful landscape that the politically engaged memoir writer must navigate in a troubled time drew tears from both fellows and panelists. As did Virginia Villanueva's more quiet account of the many contradictions of her life as a medical doctor and a Christian in war-torn Jolo, where she is also a Tausug princess by birth.

The other presentations included two on innovative fiction by Zosimo Quibilan and Jimmuel Naval; one on realist fiction by Berenice Roldan; and one on collective drama by Liza Magtoto.

Fine wine and banter

"*Baka puwede na rin kaming mag*-fellows next time," Delfin Tolentino joked as he and Ben Tapang served us fine wine, great food, haunting music, and the lovely ambiance of his hilltop home. And considering how much a part of the workshop this evening in his home has become, he might as well be one.

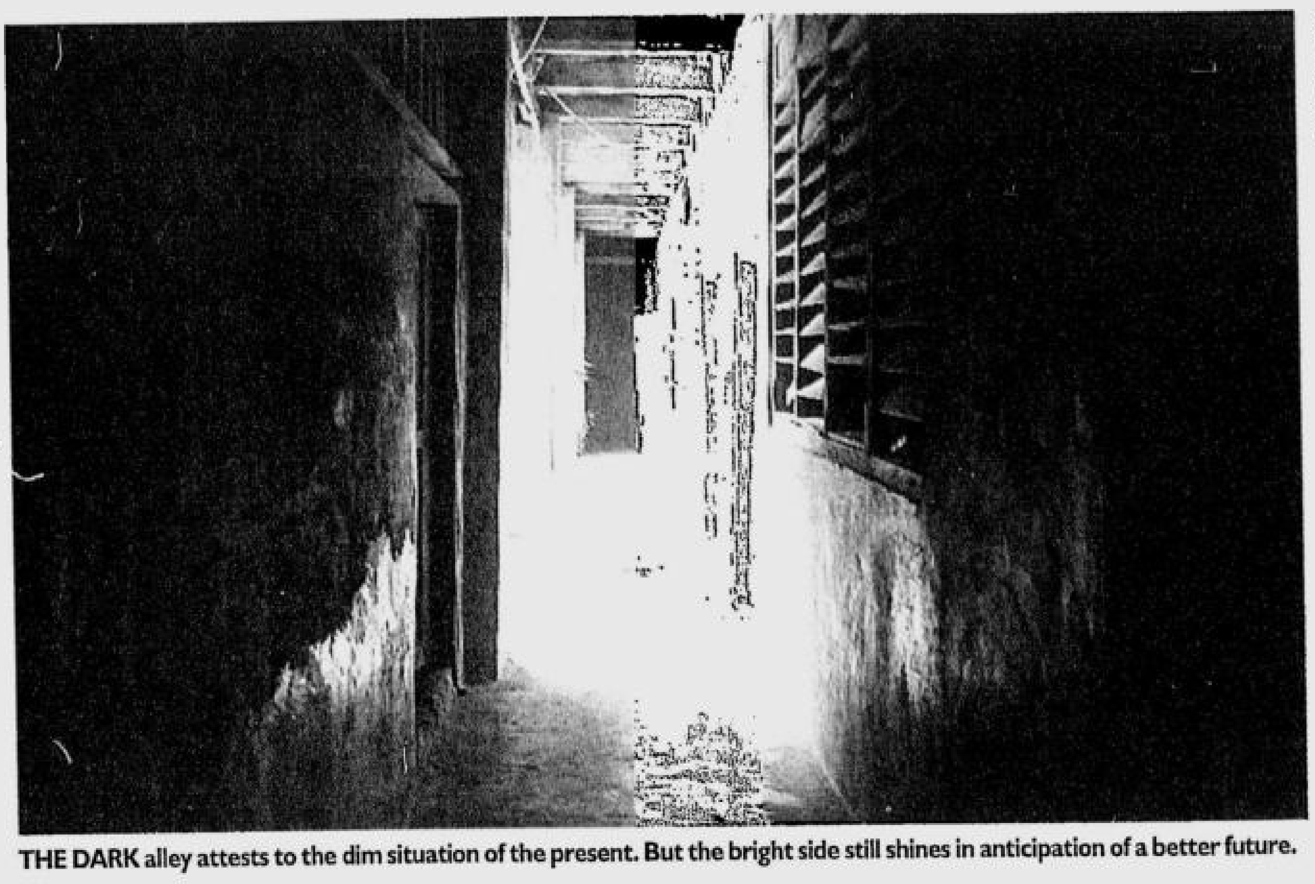
For fun night, panel and fellows headed for Maela José's wind-swept Villa Romana, perched on the winding road leading to Ambuklaw Dam, for the traditional Fellows' Night. It had been the Workshop venue some years back, but at that time, its cozy coffee shop with that startling view of the surrounding mountains did not exist. The real surprise of the evening though was the appearance of her husband, rock icon Joey "Pepe" Smith, and the three songs he consented to sing, to the joy of the star-struck writers. Also star-struck were the workshop staff, all professional writers and former fellows themselves—Marby Villaceran (ICW deputy-director), Ralph Galan, Migs Villanueva, and Tony Serrano—and guest writers Isabelita Reyes, Tara FT Sering, and Nerissa Guevara.

Another bonus was the launching of Rio Alma's new book at UP Baguio. "Sonetos Postumo" is richly illustrated with the marvelous paintings of the late Ang Kiu Kok, contains translations into English of Rio's poems by another gifted poet, Marne Kilates, and is designed by yet another poet and artist, Fidel Rillo. And the launching price was an incredibly P500!

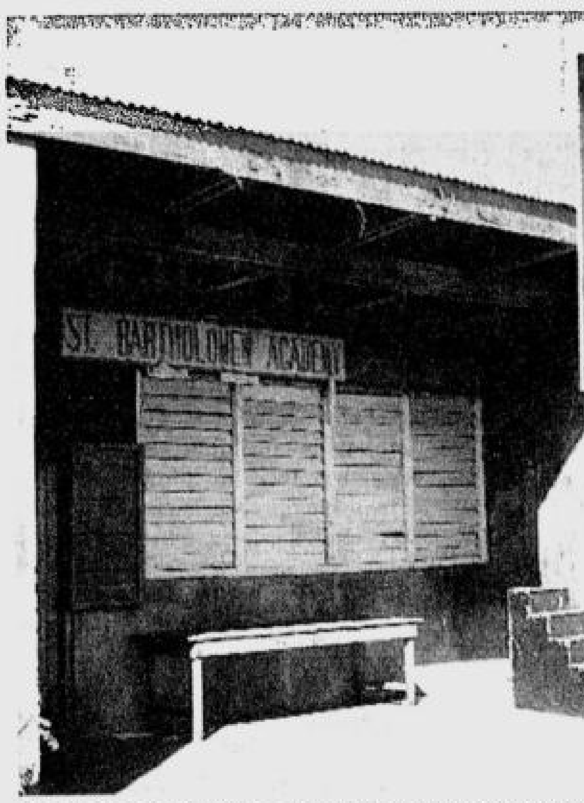
But the workshop's tight schedule left us little time for the usual trips to Café by the Ruins for the wonderful soups and salads, the fresh *lumpia* and the homemade bacon; the bowls of fresh strawberries and pots of ginger tea; or to *ukay-ukay* or Ibay's; or to Pilgrim's Café, at the corner of Leonard Wood and Brent Drive, to listen to our old friends, the band On Call, and Ivan singing Broadway hits. Never mind. We were really there for some serious work.

During the Workshop's candle-lit closing rites, I thought I'd answer one of the fellows' questions: "You were worried about whether you had met our expectations. You did that, and more. You showed us the future of Philippine literature. And we are content."

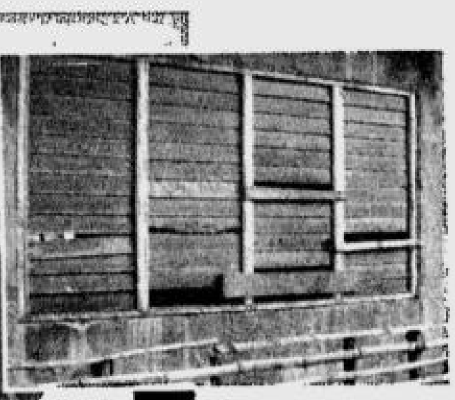
THE WORKSHOP Staff (from left): Migs Villanueva, Ralph Galan, Marby Villaceran



THE DARK alley attests to the dim situation of the present. But the bright side still shines in anticipation of a better future.



ST. BATHOLOMEW Academy's façade. Its original buildings have long been gone. The one standing was built in 1979.



THE WINDOWS have to be reinforced and repaired every now and then. A better material must be purchased for the windows to withstand the stormy weather on the island.

School in Babuyan islands needs help

FOR OVER 48 YEARS NOW, the Dominican friars of the Philippines administer a high school on the remote island of Calayan, which is among the Babuyan group on the northern coast of Luzon.

The island is 6-8 hours by boat from mainland Luzon. The boat trips are occasional, as weather conditions are unpredictable. There are no air services.

The high school is called St. Bartholomew Academy. It has been in existence since 1958.

The Catholic school was established at the request of the people of the island, and its operation has always been considered an apostolate of Dominicans to open educational opportunities for the people.

The families, for the most part, are engaged in subsistence farming and fishing. The remoteness of the island and their consequent neglect in development, the large number of children in almost all of the families, and the realization on the part of the people of the "dead-end" character of farming and fishing as a source of livelihood have created an awareness of the need for education as a way of opening greater opportunities for their children.

Consequently the people have been eager to send their children to school, and over the years the results have been very gratifying.

Many of the graduates have secured good jobs they would otherwise not have been able to get. Also, they have values that mark them out as good citizens and responsible parents.

After graduating from high school, many have gone to the mainland for college education. They have either gained employment elsewhere or returned to the island to work in local government jobs. This has helped raise the general condition in the islands.

Unfortunately, St. Bartholomew Academy now faces two problems that threaten its own existence.

Initially the school was constructed through gifts and donations from various benefactors, with the local people providing a good deal of labor in the construction. But the people have only limited income so they have not been able to raise money to maintain the school.

The first problem is the physical condition of the building. The building is quite old. Constant salt-laden sea breeze and annual exposure to storms that hit the islands, which are along the typhoon belt, have rendered the school in a serious state of disrepair.

The second problem is providing adequate compensation for the teachers. The only source of funds for the payment of salaries for the staff comes from the tuition paid by the students. For the most part, the parents have a difficulty in paying the tuition.

The tuition fee is P4,000, and the highest-paid teacher receives P3,975 per month while the lowest-paid receives P1,000. The total monthly payroll amounting to P29,962 is distributed among 12 teachers.

If tuition is raised to provide the added compensation to the teachers, many parents will be unable to support their children's education. This dilemma leads to a situation of instability for both students and the teachers.

Some students had dropped out. Some teachers had left the school for better salaries.

To address the problems, the Dominican administrators have launched a campaign which seeks to raise $50,000 to rehabilitate the classrooms and construct facilities of the mission high school. The campaign also seeks to set up a subsidy for teachers' salaries ($10,000 per year for the next five years, or $50,000).

Donors are requested that the amount for both initiatives be an outright grant. This would be regarded as an investment in the future of the young people of the island.

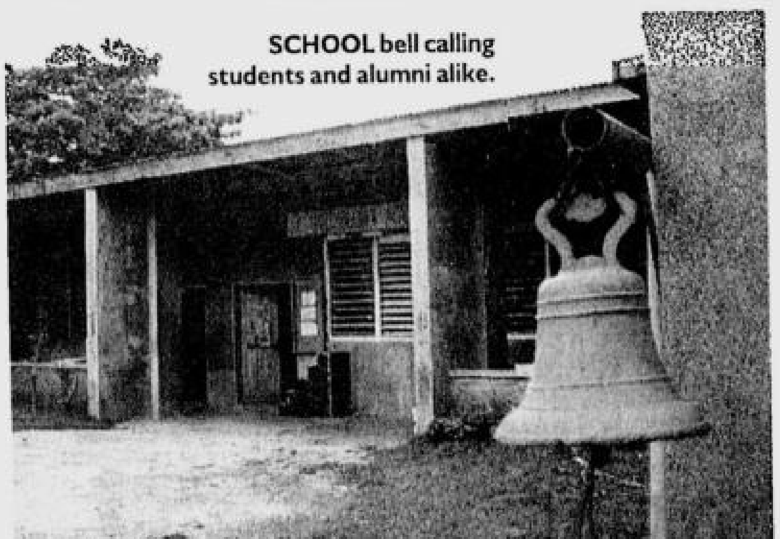
In the next five years, the administrators will exert efforts to seek other funds to establish a permanent foundation from which the subsidy for teachers' salaries can be sourced.

Donors may send their assistance to: Land Bank (account name, St. Bartholomew Academy; account number, 0861-1285-80).

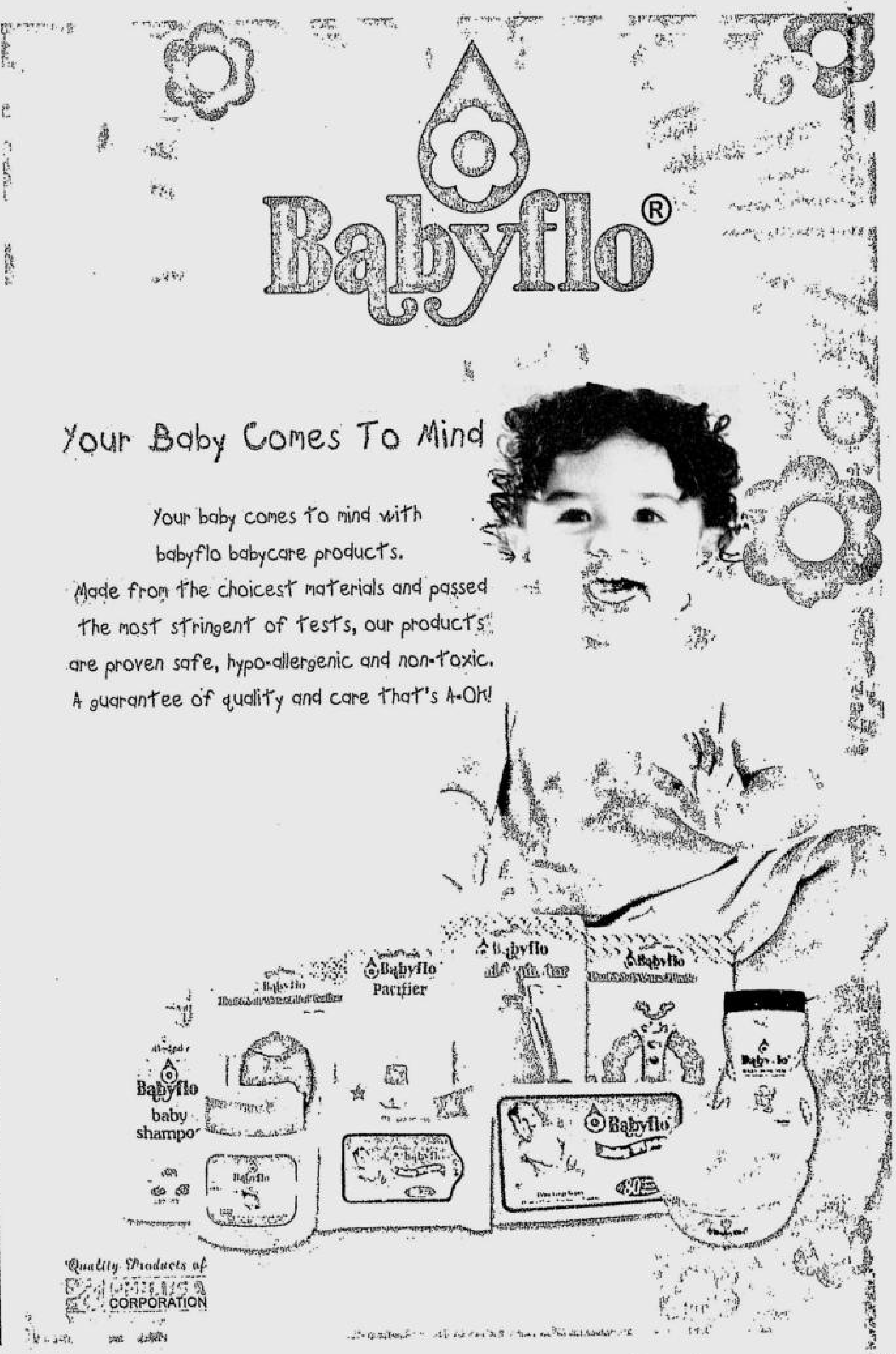
Donors may also call Fr. Dennis E. Maquiraya, O.P., of the Calayan mission, 0921-2994652.

In Manila, donors may contact: Br. Jeff Aytona, OP, tel. 7126275 or 7437758; and Fr. Raymund José, OP, tel. 7313125.

DILAPIDATED roof provides more danger than shelter.



SCHOOL bell calling students and alumni alike.



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Naguib Mahfouz, Nobel laureate

NAGUIB Mahfouz

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODERN Egyptian novel is largely reflected in the work of Naguib Mahfouz, the first writer in Arabic to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1988.

Mahfouz was born in the Gamaliya quarter of Cairo on Dec. 11, 1911. He has published over 30 novels.

The PowerBooks Award Winner Feature for the month of May declares himself to be the "son of two civilizations": first, of the 7,000-year-old "Pharaonic" civilization and, second, of the 1,400-year-old Islamic civilization. He has used both cultures as a subject and setting for his various works.

His first published book was a translation of James Baikie's concise history of Ancient Egypt ("Misr Al-Qadimah," 1932), published by the periodical Al-Majalah Al-Jadidah (The New Magazine). Mahfouz's first published novel was the 1939 "Abath al-Aqdar" (Ironies of Fate), dealing with "the malediction of Ra." It was followed by two other historical novels about ancient Egypt.

After the series of historical books, the author turned to telling stories of his own era. "Khan al-Khalili" (1945) is a record of modern Cairo, named after a working-class area, followed by "Zuqaq al-midaqq" (Midaq Alley), after a street in Cairo.

The work that brought Naguib Mahfouz universal fame was the realistic masterpiece "al-Thulathiyya" (Cairo Trilogy), which includes "Bayn al-qasrayn" (Palace Walk, 1956), "Qasr al-shawq" (Palace of Desire, 1957), and "al-Sukkariya" (Sugar Street, 1957)

One of Mahfouz's works, "Children of Gebelawi," was banned in Egypt for alleged blasphemy. In 1994, some extremists attempted to assassinate the 82-year-old novelist outside his Cairo home. The Nobel Prize laureate now lives under constant bodyguard protection.

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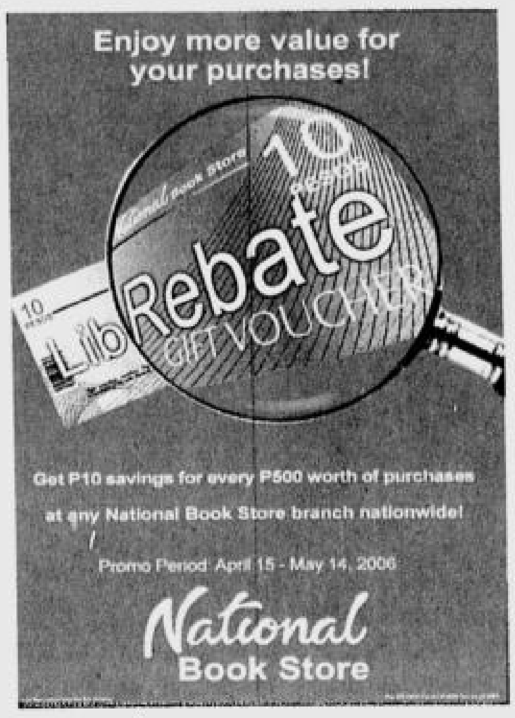
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Outspoken essays...

From page F2

Aquino administration, but under José's pen, he was the social reformer—a side few people remember.

The National Artist also focuses on businessman Alfonso Yuchengco and José's personal knowledge of the man shows an appreciative view of the former ambassador.

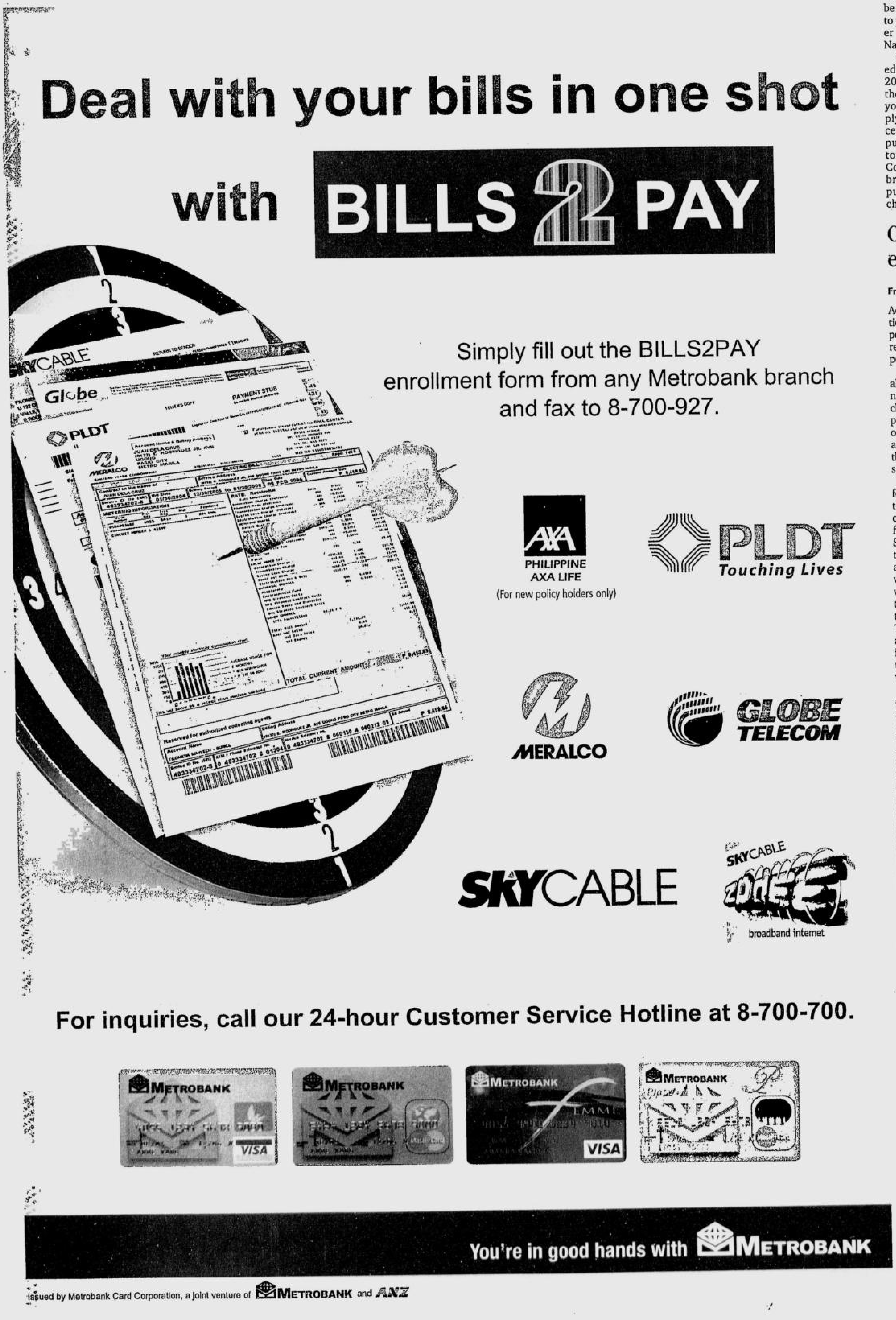
But some of the unforgettable essays in this collection are the ones that are loosely fitted in the sections. Scattered here and there are the author's adventures, misadventures, and observations on food, culture, writing, education, and history. They are entertaining and meaningful musings of his years of travel and association with different people.

The most telling essays in "Heroes... and Termites..." are those confronting Philippine problems. José, admittedly, is critical of the Filipinos for not wisely exploiting natural and other resources that can uplift our economy; for pandering to politicians rather than emulating national heroes; for being nationalists but in an inward way that, as José says, "protect inefficient industries and monopolies"; and for losing their ethical moorings.

In the last essay, "Why We Are Poor," José offers two solutions for our country's malaise: a nationalist education and a revolution.

All in all, this book is a must-read. It is not just a compilation of impressions and reflections. It is a revelation for all—from the ordinary Filipino to the top politician who sits at the helm of the nation, and to the reader who helps in the development of the country. It also answers a simple question, one that Filipinos have always failed to face.

Why are we poor? It is because of our own fault.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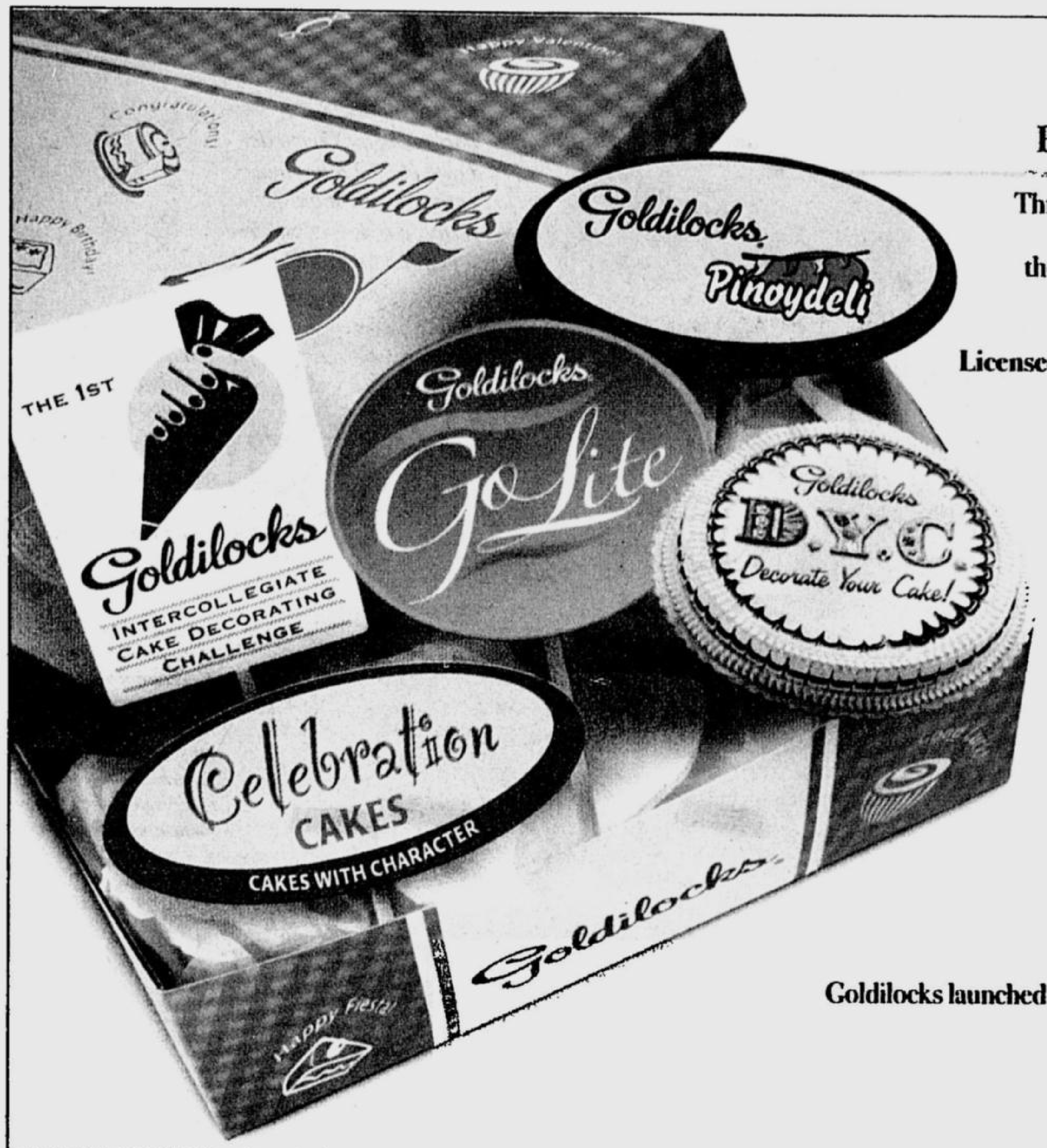

Happy Valentine
Congratulations!
Happy Birthday!
Goldilocks
Goldilocks Pinoydeli
THE 1ST
Goldilocks
INTERCOLLEGIATE
CAKE DECORATING
CHALLENGE
Goldilocks
Go Lite
Goldilocks
D.Y.C.
Decorate Your Cake!
Celebration
CAKES
CAKES WITH CHARACTER
Goldilocks
Happy Fiesta!

FROM GOLDILOCKS, GIFTS OF INNOVATION

Through the years, Goldilocks has committed itself to giving the Filipino family the gift of innovation: new products and services that celebrate the Filipino palate and food traditions. No wonder Goldilocks has stayed at the forefront of the industry.

Licensed Popular Cartoon Characters. The first bakeshop to introduce fully licensed Cartoon Network characters. Even Pinoy fun heroes like Panday and Darna.

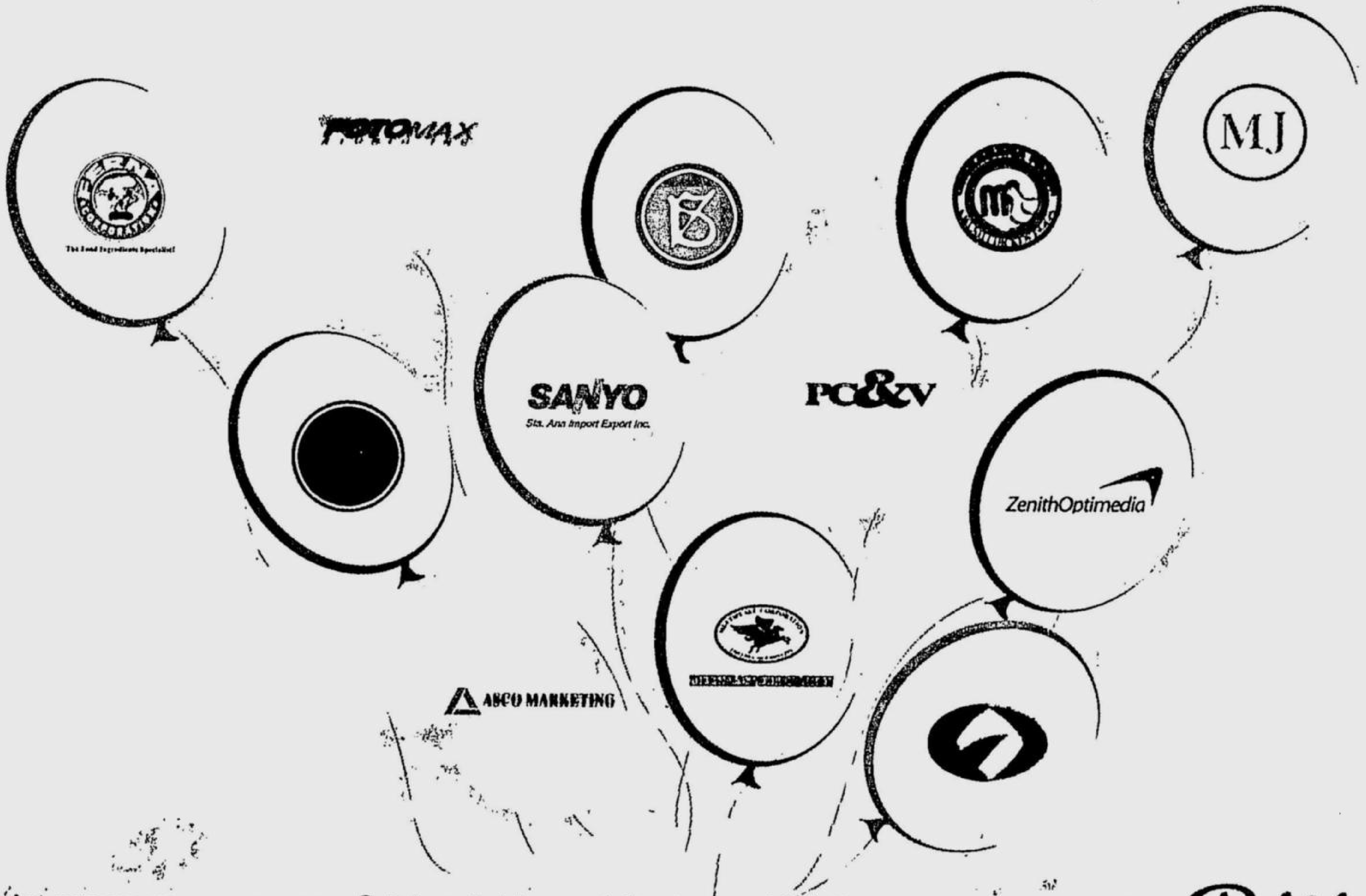
Pinoydeli, Pinoy Ulam. Introduced in 2005. Ready-to-serve, ready-to-eat Pinoy comfort food in convenient packs: dinuguan, lechon paksiw and bopis. And more coming up soon with the same delicious taste of freshly prepared Pinoy food.

Go for health? Go Lite!
Recently launched a range of Go-Lite products: Sugar-free Mamon, Mango Mousse Lite, Vanilla Cake Lite and Sugar-free Ensaymada.

Decorate Your Cake!
A fun bonding activity for moms and their kids. Available in key Goldilocks outlets.

A Career Path for Young Bakers
To encourage future bakers and open career paths in baking, Goldilocks launched the first Inter-Collegiate Cake Decorating Challenge in March 2006.

Return of the Nelusko Cake and other Classics
... such as Pineapple Upside Down Cake.

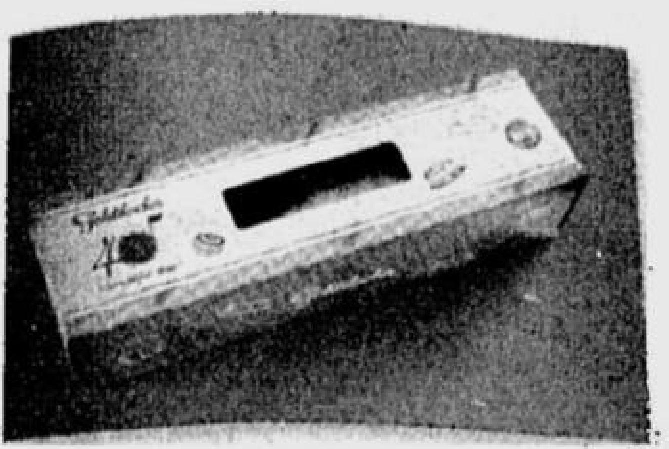

The Food Ingredients Specialist
FOTOMAX
MJ
SANYO
Sta. Ana Import Export Inc.
PC&V
ZenithOptimedia
ASCO MARKETING

Here's to many more years of Friendship and Partnership! Happy 40th Birthday, Goldilocks

The first Goldilocks store opened on May 15, 1966 at 2300 Pasong Tamo, Makati City.

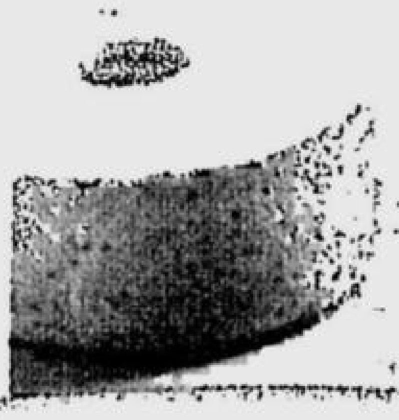
PASONG TAMO

The first bakeshop in the Philippines to sell rolls in specially designed long boxes. The plastic roll bags, on the other hand, were originated by Goldilocks and have become the standard for plastic roll bag packaging in the country.

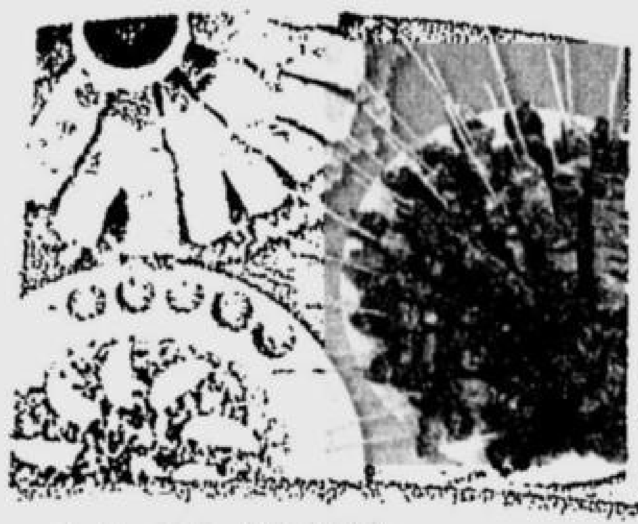


First to innovate packaging for Crema de Fruta in the Philippines. Inspired by a Spanish recipe, it is now considered a Filipino "original".

Tube pan cakes in different flavors were among Goldilocks' first products.



Chocolate Mousse and Black Forest Premium Cakes were inspired by baking trends abroad and adapted to Filipino taste.



From its initial offerings of simple baked goods, Goldilocks has expanded to catering services and full meals and merienda choices with the Pinoy palate in mind.

Goldilocks was one of the Filipino pioneers on foreign shores, opening its first outlet thirty years ago in Los Angeles, California.

Winner, Most Promising Filipino Franchise in 1999.

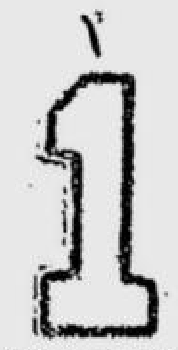
Awarded the 2004 Outstanding Filipino Franchise of the Year, the 2005 Outstanding Filipino Franchise of the Year HALL OF FAME, and the Franchise Marketing Campaign by the Philippine Franchise Association.

Opened in 1984, the Vancouver store is a popular destination for Canadians of European and Asian descent for its wedding cakes.

40

YEARS OF MEMORIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND HEART-WARMING TRIVIA

Another request spanned two decades and two continents. In the 70's, a boy celebrated his birthday with a Goldilocks Batman-themed cake. 20 years later, his sister (who had moved to Canada) ordered a replica of the cake for her own son's birthday. Goldilocks recreated the cake, using only an old snapshot.

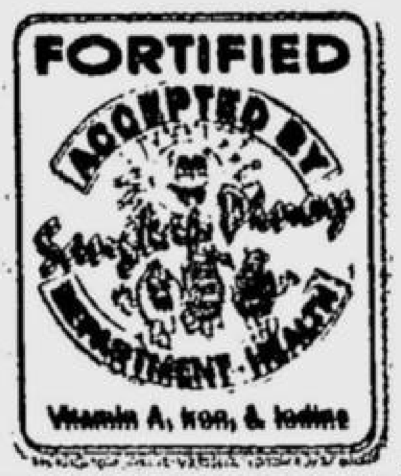


Best performing bakeshop in the Filipino hearts and mind. With 100% total brand awareness and top-of-mind score of 71% per. 2005 UAI study.

Five-time Parangal ng Bayan winner for Most Outstanding Bakeshop.

Hall-of-Fame Awardee as Most Outstanding Bakeshop from the Consumers Union of the Philippines.

Goldilocks Fresh Bake, the 1st Filipino bread line to receive the Department of Health's Sangkap Pinoy seal, affirming that Goldilocks products meet, even exceed, government standards for vitamin fortification.



Goldilocks introduced bromate-free bread ahead of government legislation.

Goldilocks Bitbit Packs: How thoughtful. How Pinoy! Based on the Filipino tradition of pasalubong and the Filipino value of sharing, a "bitbit" contains favorite snacks or cakes in individual packs for family members to share and enjoy.

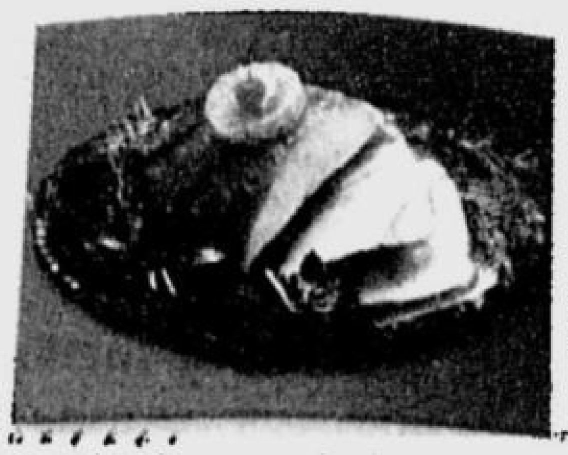
Goldilocks
Bitbit
BAON Packs

Goldilocks recently launched its delivery service Handa Line 888-1-999, Isang tawag lang, handa na!

Goldilocks
888 1 999

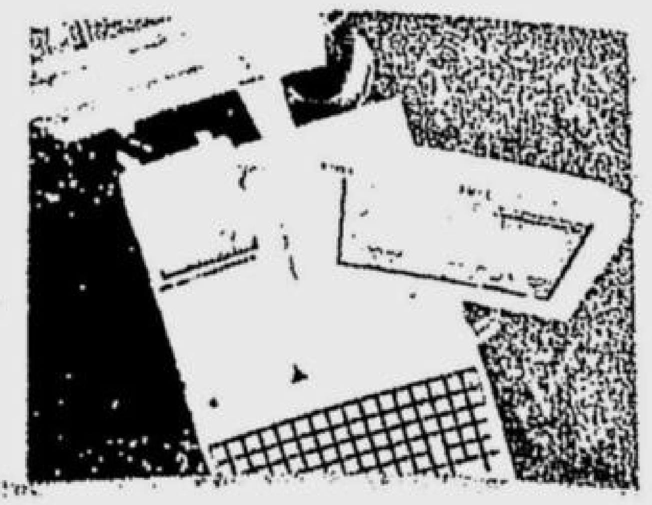
For Goldilocks, Christmas season extends from December 16 – 31, with volume surging by 300% and all of its the plants operating 24 hours a day.

Goldilocks



Filipinos in the U.S. do not have to miss out on Christmas traditions like Noche Buena. Sweet ham, stuffed chicken, puto, cakes and rolls are all offered in the U.S. stores.

On its first day, total receipts amounted to P574. In 2005, system-wide total sales reached over P4B.



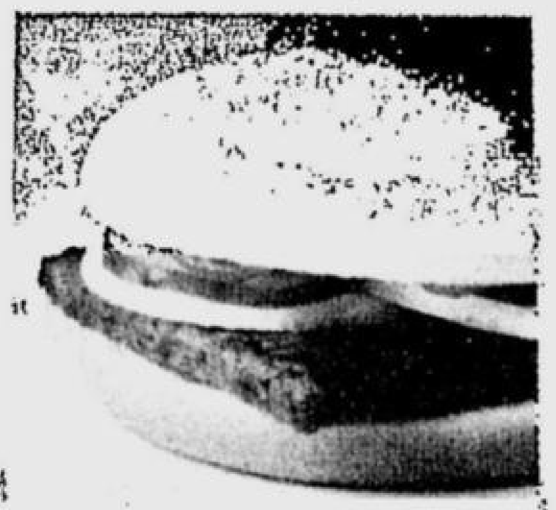
From a workforce of ten when it started, Goldilocks now has over 2,000 employees.

"Goldilocks is more than just a fairy tale character to you".

(see page 66 of the book)

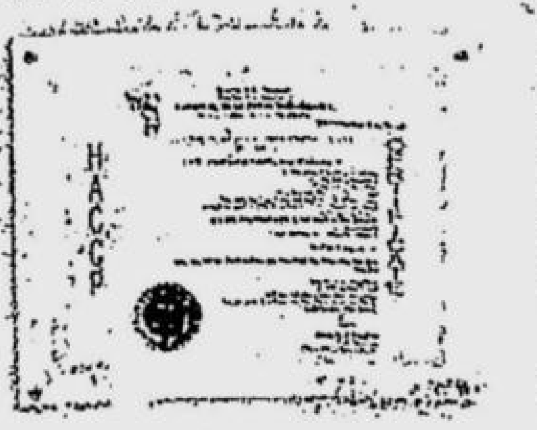
As part of its school nutrition program, USAID accredited Goldilocks to produce Nutribuns in the late 60's – mid 70's. They were produced daily at the Pasong Tamo Makati plant.

As they entered the Philippine market, famous fastfood chains like McDonald's, Wendy's, Burger King and Carl's Jr, partnered with Goldilocks to produce their burger buns.

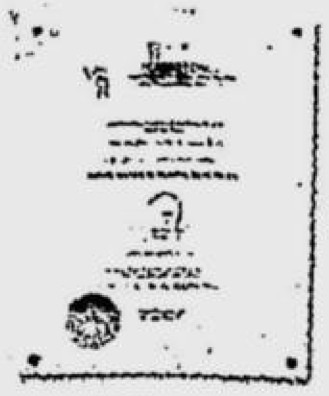


There are now seventeen stores in North America, sixteen in the West Coast and one in Vancouver, Canada.

In May 2006, its Food Processing Plant will be awarded the Triple-A rating by the National Meat Inspection Services, a testimony to the company's commitment to food safety and quality.



One of the first 100 companies in the country to get GMP and SSOP (Good Manufacturing Practices and Standard Sanitation Operating Procedures) certification.



Goldilocks has provided catering services for many foreign dignitaries, among them was the well-loved Pope John Paul II.

Did you know that the name Goldilocks was chosen because it suggested luck and prosperity? And luck it was that the two sisters who started the business shared a common passion: baking. One of them was a nurse who loved to bake and cook, while the other - who was in banking and finance - loved to bake and decorate cakes. With their sister-in-law who was also fond of decorating cakes, they put up their first bakeshop in a one-door apartment along Pasong Tamo, Makati City.

The story of Goldilocks Bakeshop spans 40 years, marked by many achievements and important milestones.

One unusual order ever received by Goldilocks was for a miniature cake replica of the Ali Mall Building for its opening and blessing. The cake, however, could not be brought inside the building as the cake could not fit through the door!

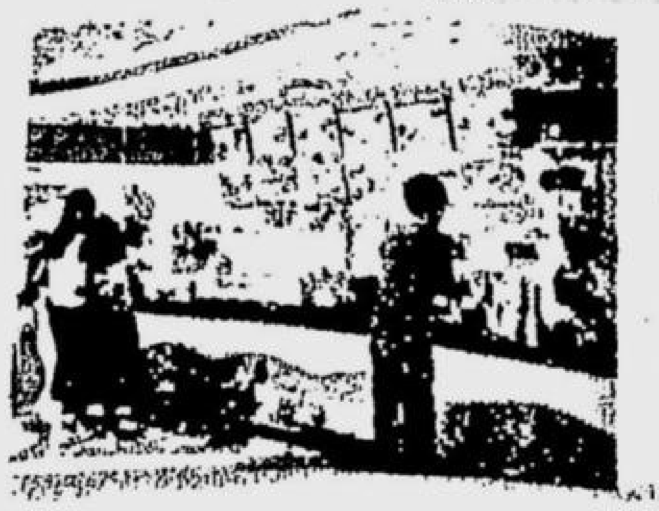
The bestsellers in the US and Canada are the same bestsellers in the Philippines: fresh lumpia, mamon and ensaymada.

Hall-of-Fame Inductee in the National Consumers Quality Awards

Goldilocks Cake Plant is recipient of the Department of Environment Natural Resources Award for its staunch environmental efforts.

Ranked among the top eight fastfood chains in the country.

With Sweet Delights Polvoron and Pik-A-Pop Caramel Popcorn, Goldilocks becomes the first bakeshop to brand its popular products for distribution in groceries and supermarkets.



In 2002, Goldilocks was relaunched with a new world-class look and feel.

party
Funfeast

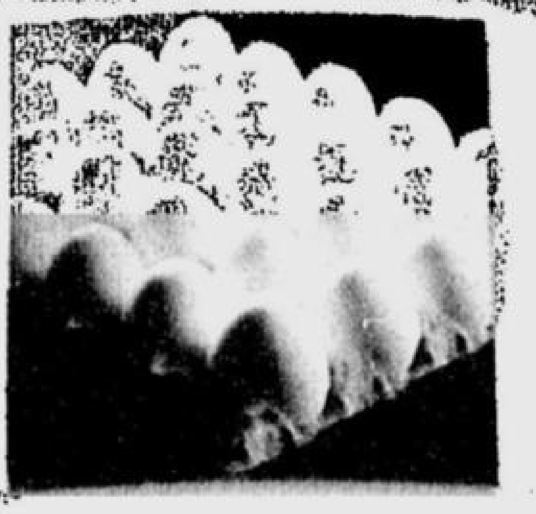
Party Funfeast packages made Pinoy party favorites easily available over the counter.

Philippine Airlines

First supplied Philippine Airlines with snack cakes in the 60's. Now, Goldilocks products are again being served in both domestic and selected international flights.

Goldilocks has separate Research and Development for bakery and décor, to ensure its cakes are not only great-tasting but also great-looking.

Goldilocks provides the much-needed support for the local poultry industry with its Shaw Cake Plant alone using three million eggs a month.



Congratulations to:

Goldilocks'®

40th Anniversary

N'Whip
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POUR N'WHIP
AVOSET NON-DAIRY PASTRY TOPPING

Greetings From:

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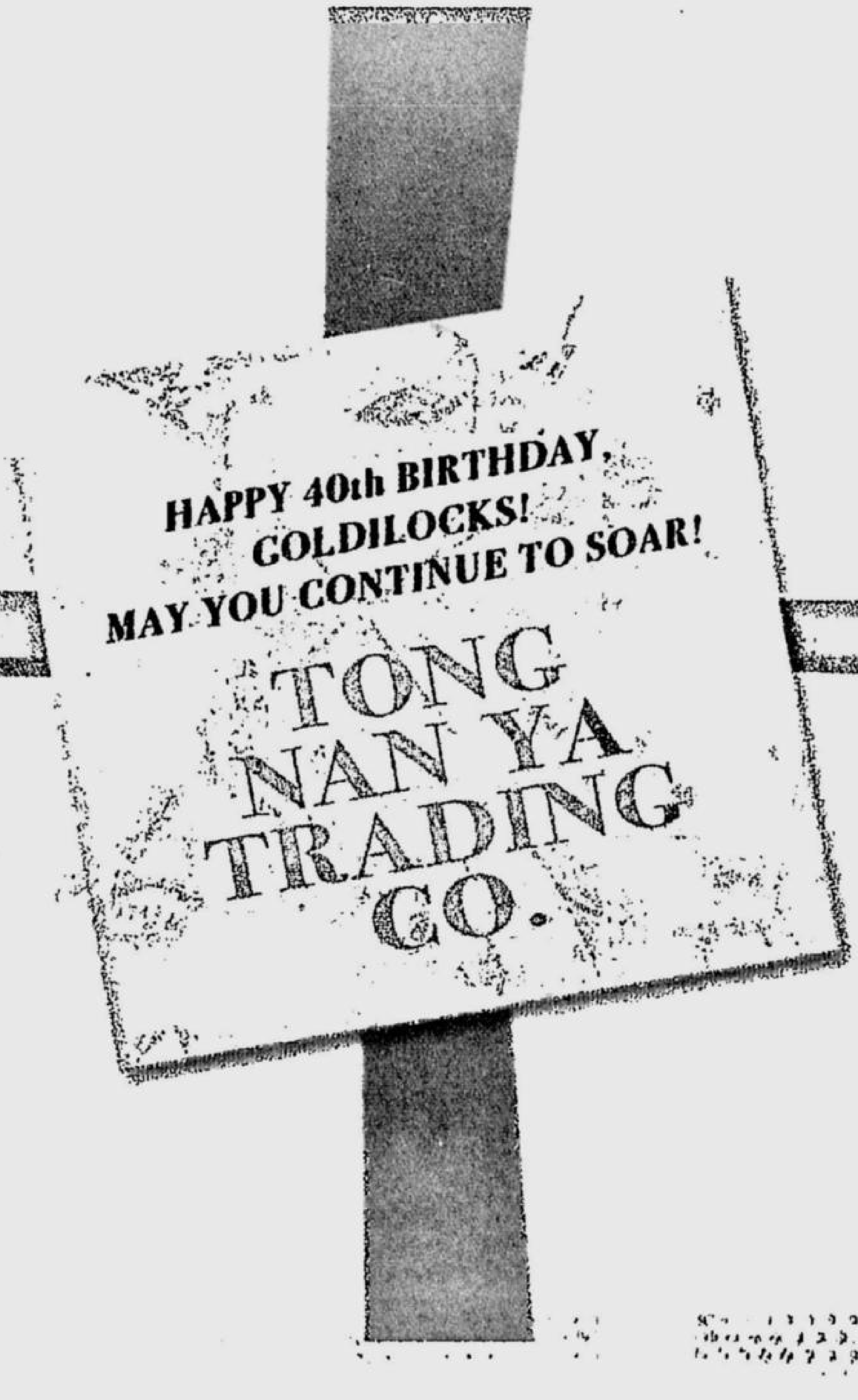
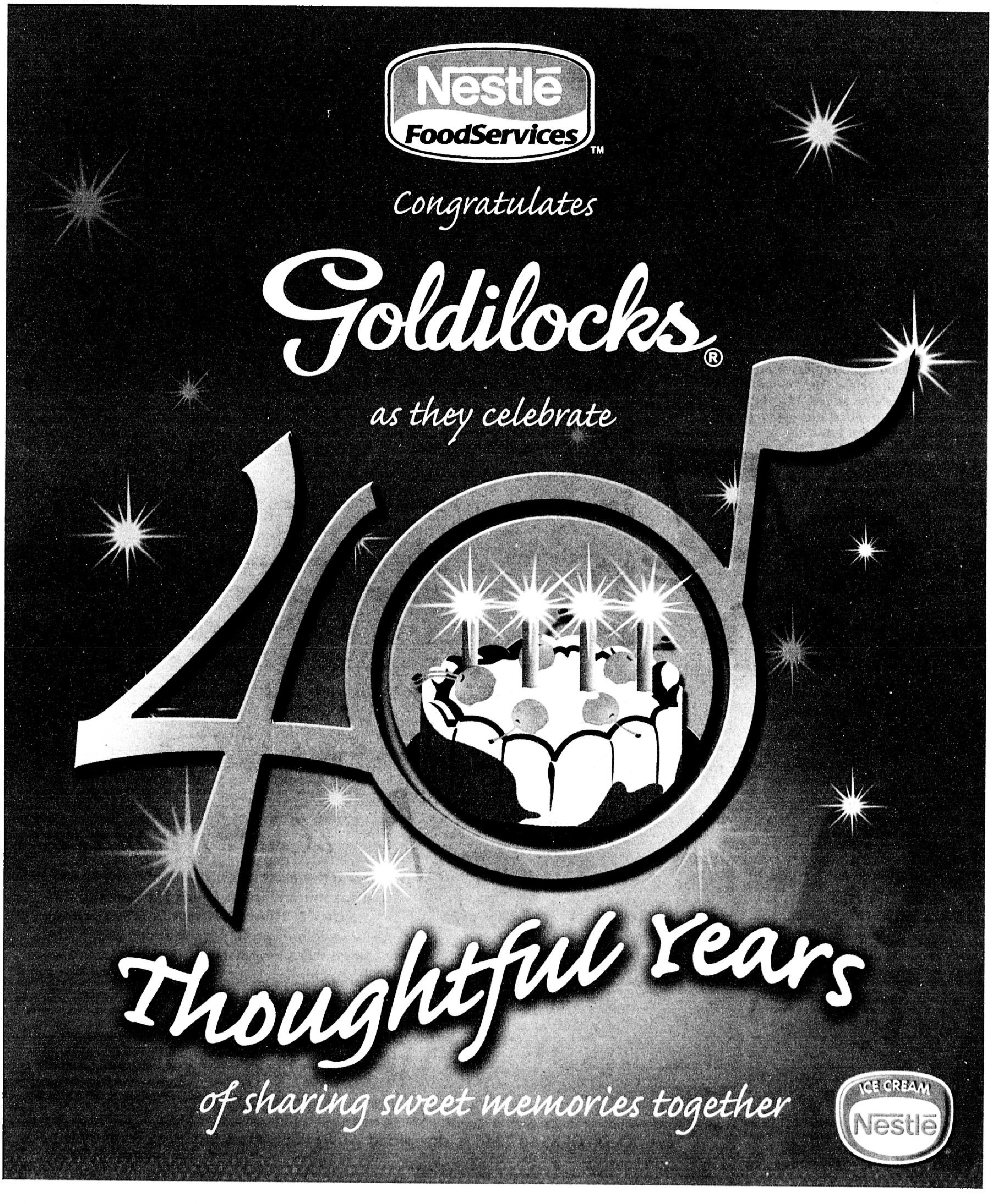


HAPPY 40th BIRTHDAY,
GOLDILOCKS!
MAY YOU CONTINUE TO SOAR!

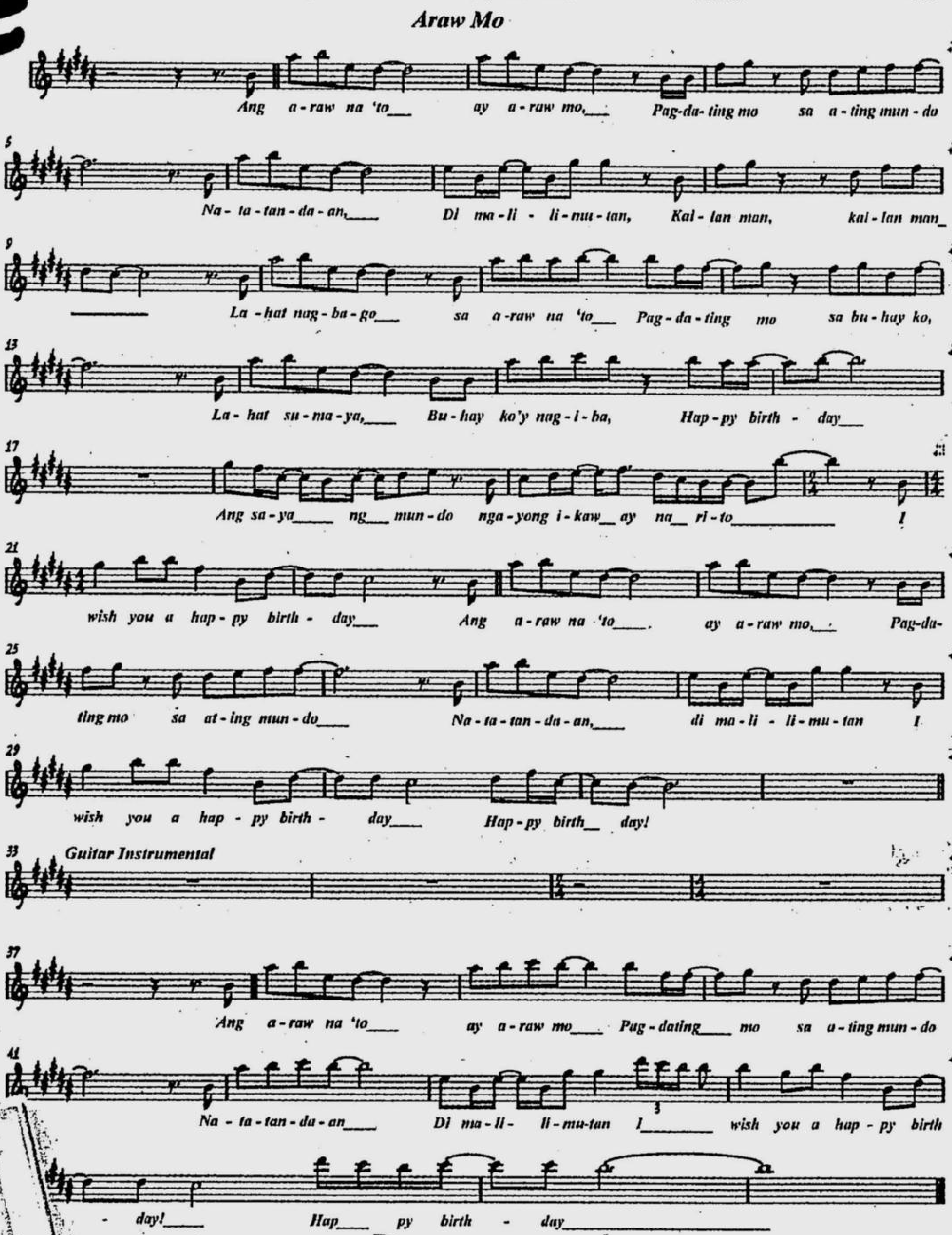
TONG
NAN YA
TRADING
CO.


Nestlé
FoodServices™
Congratulates
Goldilocks®
as they celebrate
40
Thoughtful Years
of sharing sweet memories together
ICE CREAM
Nestlé

Finally,
Our Very
Own Birthday Song!

What's a birthday celebration without a birthday cake... and a birthday song? Araw Mo is Goldilocks' gift to all Filipino birthday celebrants. An original Filipino composition that will hopefully replace the foreign ditty that we've always sung, Araw Mo best reflects our deepest sentiments, our unique way of greeting our loved ones on their birthday.

Performed by Nina.


Araw Mo
Ang a-raw na 'to___ ay a-raw mo,___ Pag-da-ting mo sa a-ting mun-do
5
Na-ta-tan-da-an,___ Di ma-li-li-mu-tan, Kal-lan man, kal-lan man_
9
La-hat nag-ba-go___ sa a-raw na 'to___ Pag-da-ting mo sa bu-hay ko,
13
La-hat su-ma-ya,___ Bu-hay ko'y nag-i-ba, Hap-py birth-day___
17
Ang sa-ya___ ng___ mun-do nga-yong i-kaw__ ay na__ ri-to___ I
21
wish you a hap-py birth-day___ Ang a-raw na 'to___. ay a-raw mo,__ Pag-da-
25
ting mo sa at-ing mun-do___ Na-ta-tan-da-an,___ di ma-li-li-mu-tan I
29
wish you a hap-py birth-day___ Hap-py birth__ day!
33
Guitar Instrumental
37
Ang a-raw na 'to___ ay a-raw mo___ Pag-dating___ mo sa a-ting mun-do
41
Na-ta-tan-da-an___ Di ma-li-li-mu-tan I___ wish you a hap-py birth
-day!___ Hap___ py birth-day___

Goldilocks
40
Thoughtful Years!
araw mo
birthday song by nina

Goldilocks 40 Thoughtful Years!

iCare, iShare.

By buying this exclusive CD, you add life to L.I.F.E. (Leukemic Indigents Funds Endowment) & to UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), two non-profit organizations committed not only to improving the lives of our under-privileged children but to creating a future where the sun shines brighter and hope is never dimmed. Thank you very much for being part of it.

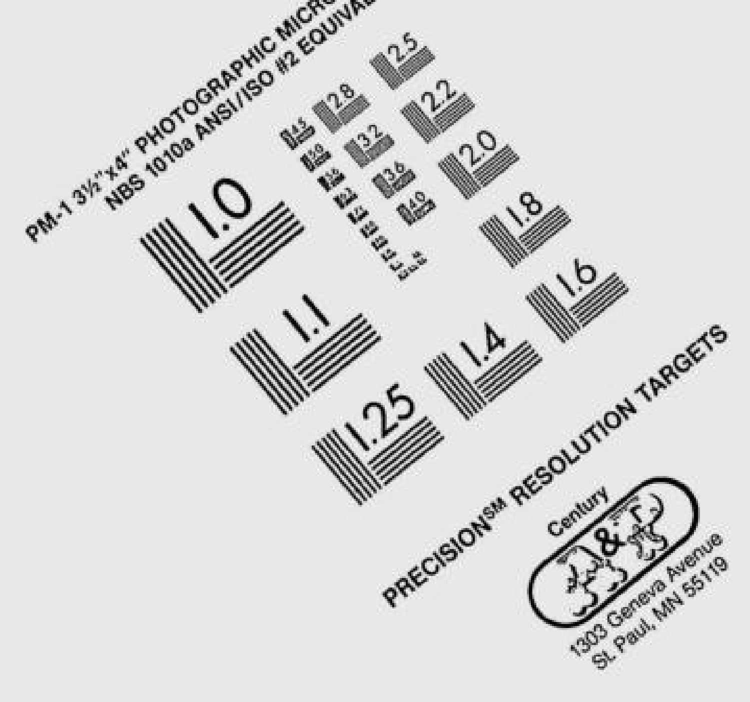
unicef

l. i. f. e.
Leukemic Indigents Fund Endowment

"Araw Mo" CD is available in all Goldilocks outlets at P75 only.

Text GOLDILOCKS to 2346 to download your FREE* "Araw Mo" Ring Tone by Nina

*registration required (P2.50/Text)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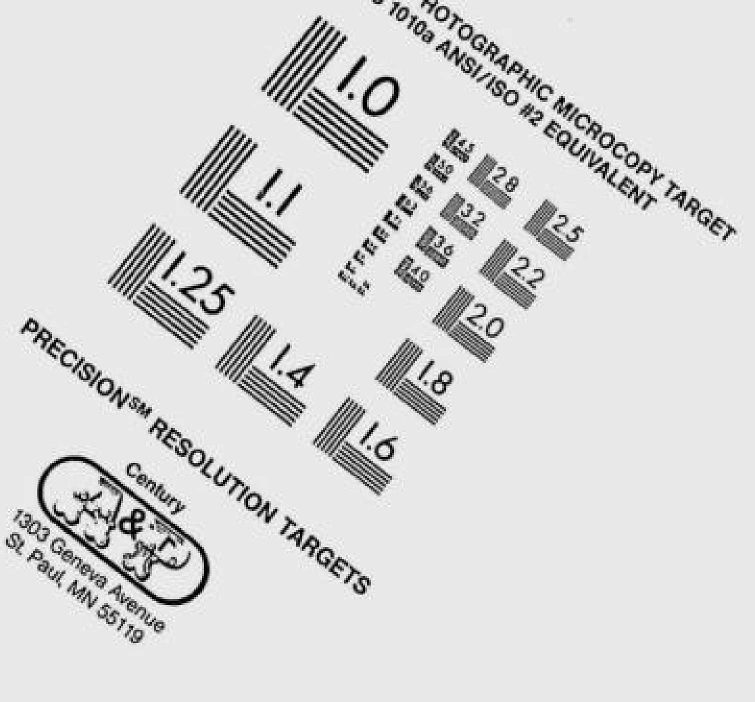
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IMAGE EVALUATION
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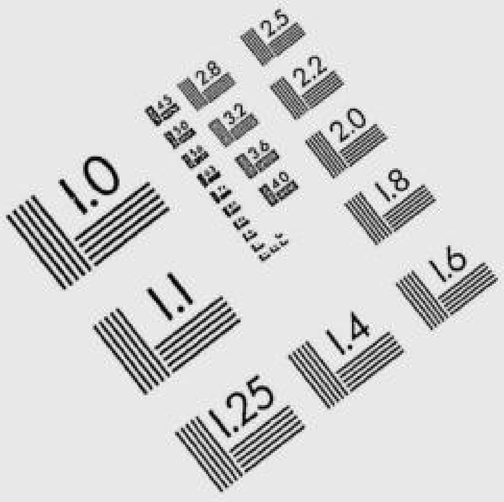
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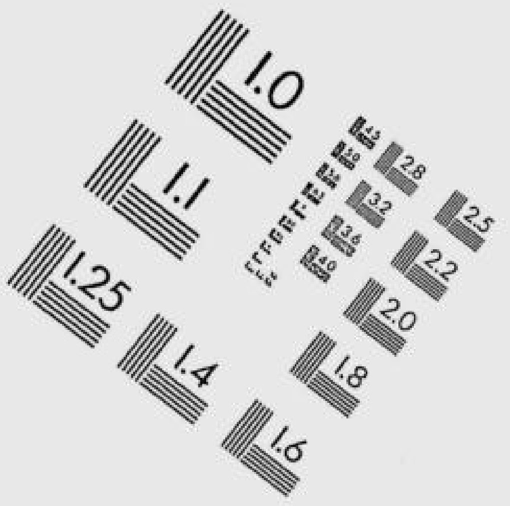
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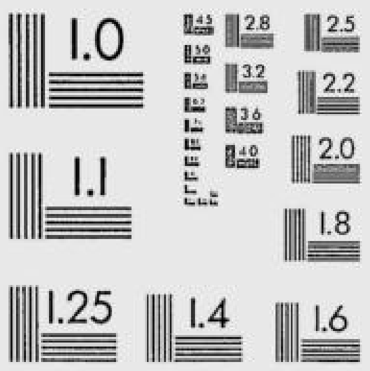
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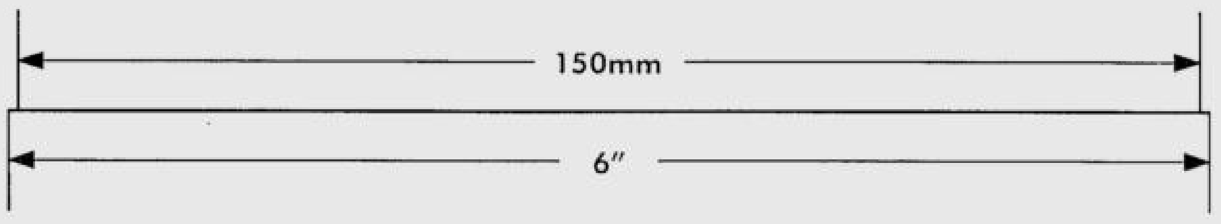

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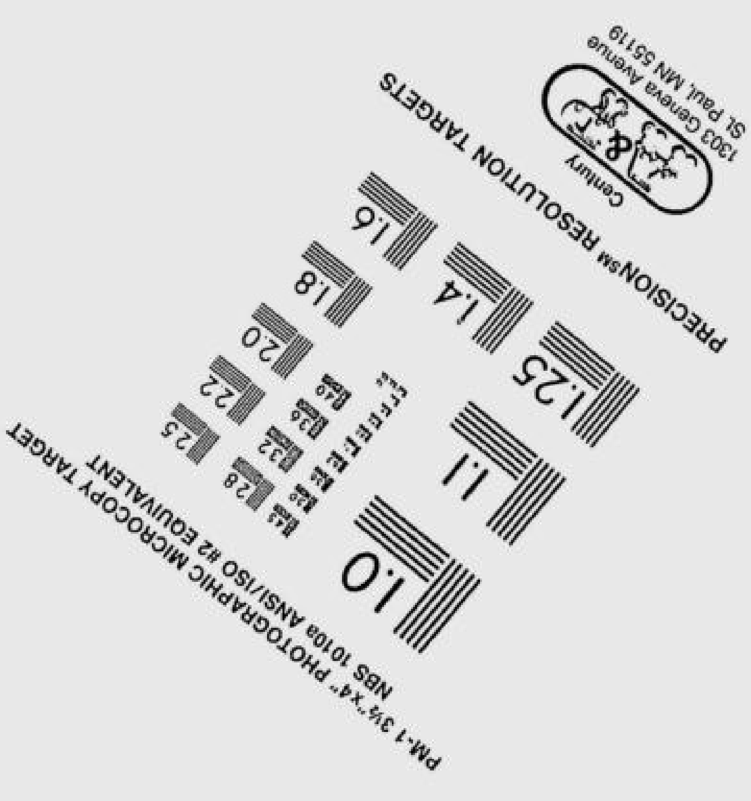
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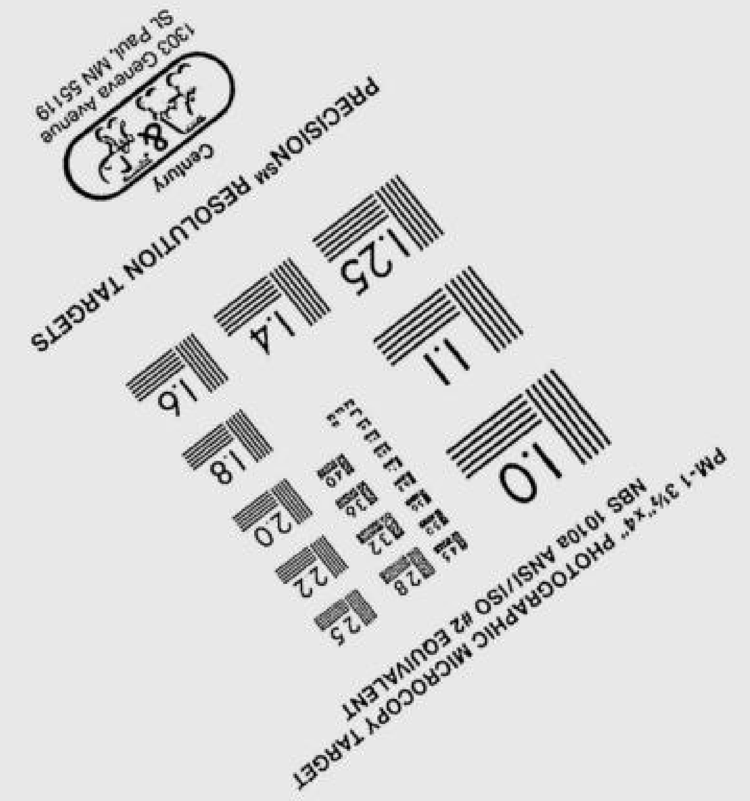
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, PHILIPPINES

MAY
1 THRU 15
2006

REEL 380

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2006

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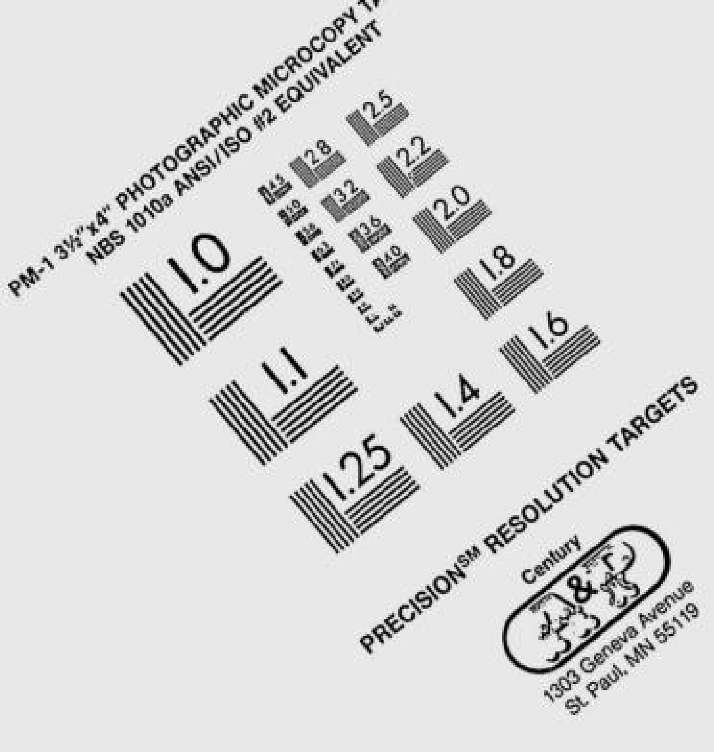
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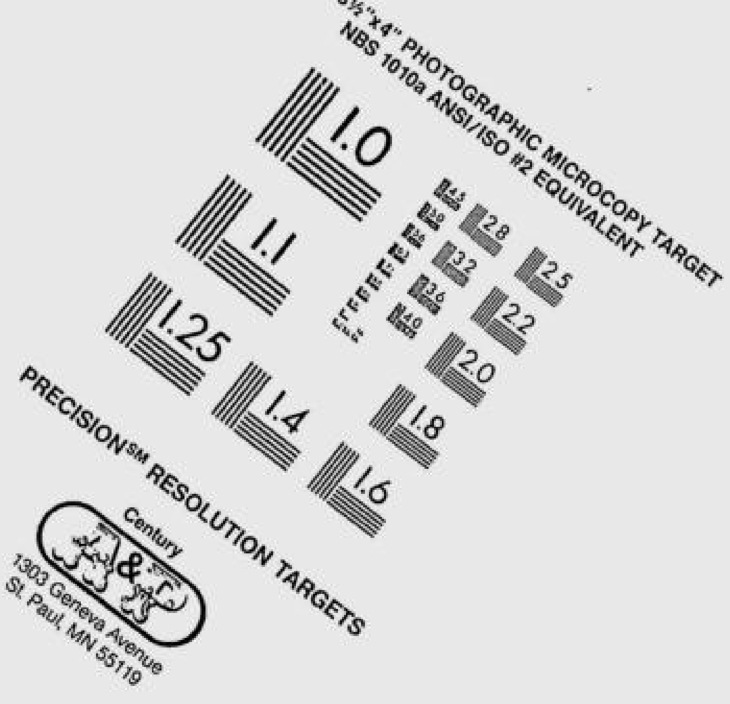
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IMAGE EVALUATION
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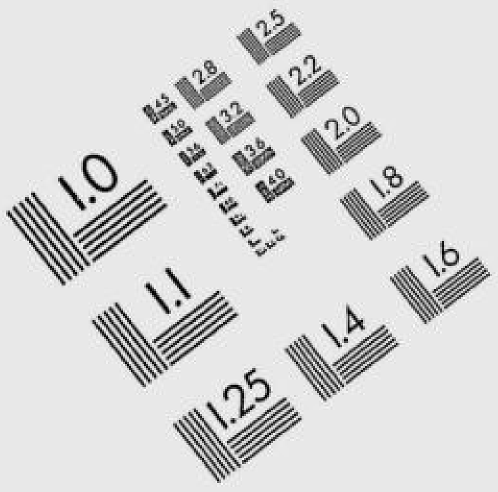
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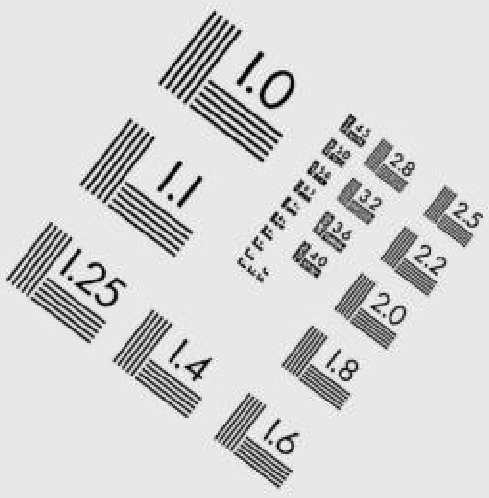
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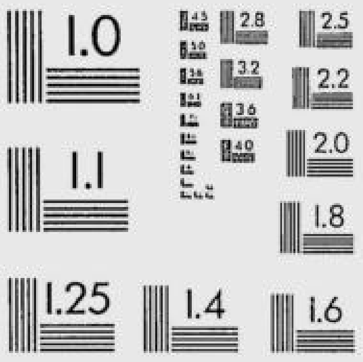
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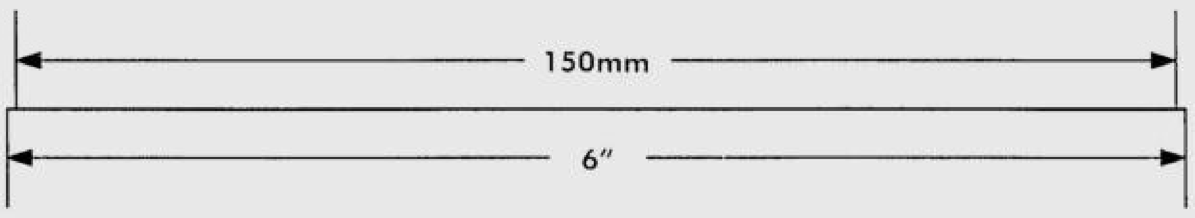

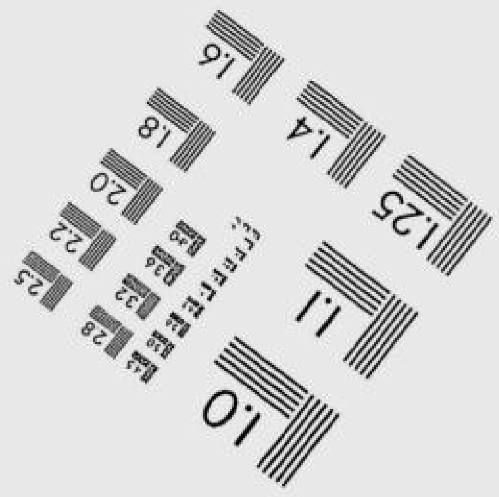
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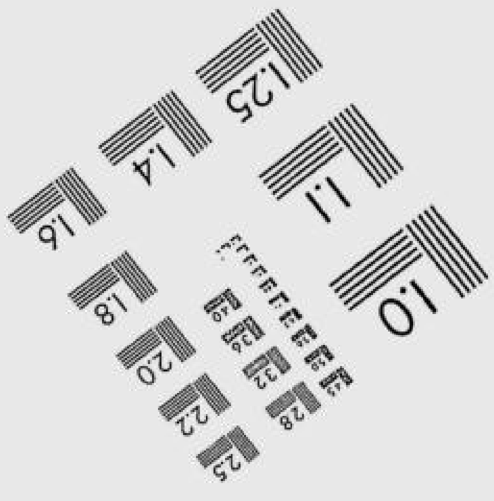
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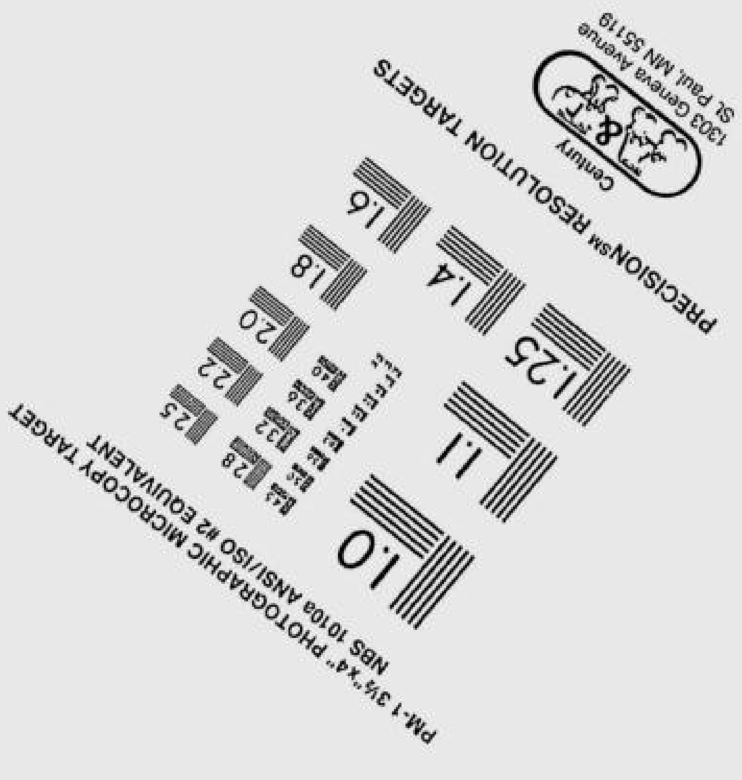
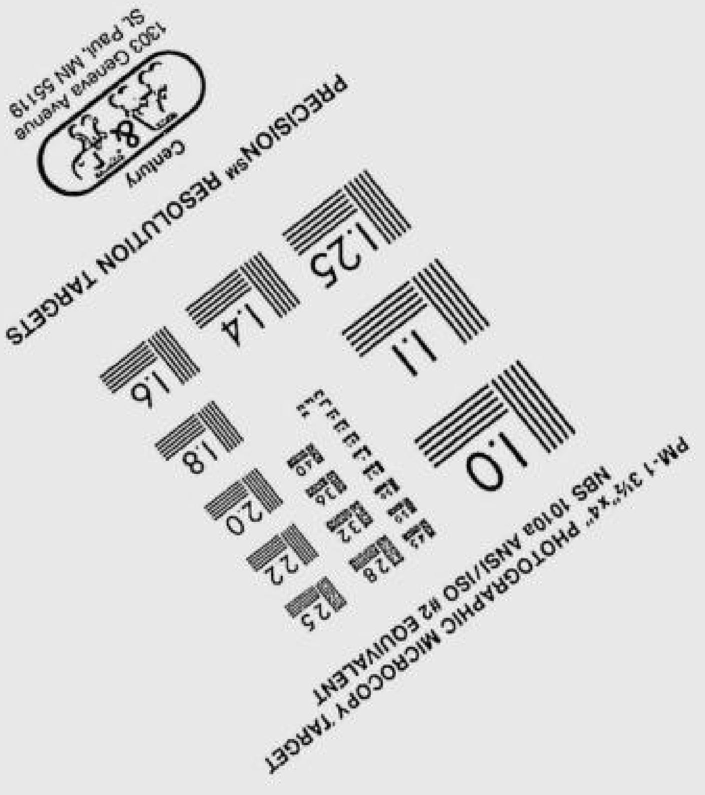

PM-1 3½"x4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT
1.0 1.1 1.25 1.4 1.6 1.8 2.0 2.2 2.5 2.8 3.2 3.6 4.0
PRECISIONSM RESOLUTION TARGETS
Century
1303 Geneva Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55119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